

THE WELSH REVIEW

Editor : GWYN JONES

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EDITORIAL

July, 1948

IT is wrong, I suppose, to imagine that most of us live in towns under duress. The majority, as evacuation showed, prefer city-life and are distrustful of, therefore unhappy in, the country. It is presumably for these—since they are the majority, which we have made all that counts—that the broadcasting of a nightingale's song was interrupted the other evening in order for the wheezing of a cinema organ to be resumed.

The brown miracle had not essayed the full zenith of its song when a bland voice observed brightly, 'Well, I'm afraid that's all we have time for now. Back to the' (I think it was) 'Elephant and Castle'. Certainly, the organ sounded like that—an elephant asthmatising, a castle crumbling. The programme had originally been interrupted, it is true, in order that we might hear, however little of, the nightingale at all. But I had just been reading that in New York there has been completed a building in which the lift-doors open half a second faster than have any previous lift-doors ever opened. This, it is 'figured', will save each tenant eight minutes a year (in which to do what?), and it seemed to me there could be no more fitting symbol of the frivolity of our civilization, or rather of the frivolity into which we have degraded it, than 'having no time' to hear the nightingale, the true living song broadcast, because the organ was waiting. We'll to the woods no more, indeed; *les lauriers* are 'cut'.

And with them, how much else! I do not mean Marshall aid, imports, income, leisure. I mean, what we do with such as is left after we've earned leisure and income. Few will agree with me when I say that to-day we live on a mainly material plane. They will point to the month's music at Harringay, the statues in Battersea Park, the thirst for books, the success of opera and ballet as evidence of growing taste and seriousness. But it seems to me that, even were the books better written, the opera better sung, and the ballets danced

better, the increased interest in them would still be due to previous pioneer work by a few, not to self-developed awakening in the many.

To-day the material world is too much with us. That is inevitable. We emerge from a war with economy shaken. We seek to rebuild it. We talk no longer in terms of humanity, but of 'man-power' and 'man-hours'. We sacrifice aims for 'targets'. Our horizon is bounded, as with a line of washing, by exports, and the word 'good' means no longer a spiritual quality, but an industrial product. This again is inevitable. I wrote early on in the war that one of war's tragedies is that peace is planned by those who are already tired, and entered on by the rest when exhausted. I wrote also, at the time of hulabaloo over the Beveridge Plan, that any self-congratulating about merely material security was dangerous because—quotations are from Radhakrishnan, unless otherwise stated—'any sense of satisfaction and security derived by submission to external authority is bought at the price of the integrity of the self. Modern views declare that the individual can be saved by his absorption into society. They forget that the group exists only to secure the complete unfolding of human personality.'

Such unfolding is to-day thought frivolous. In truth, it is the other activities on which we are engaged that are frivolous—no less frivolous than the pleasure-hysteria which succeeded the other war, because they are based on the same ignorance. And 'ignorance is not intellectual error: it is spiritual blindness'. Whichever part of the world we envisage, we come upon a frivolity which can only be called cynical. In Trinidad, that citrus-growing island, ask for grape-fruit juice, and they open an imported tin. In England, we plan National Parks and then, in the district where beauty is greatest and the need for it most, those plans are threatened because they would interfere with limestone quarrying. In Palestine, we pay lip-service to 'the Holy Places' without respecting the real citadel of holiness, Man himself, 'since the rebirth of man is an event that happens within his own soul' and 'a liberated soul uses his body as a vehicle for the manifestation of the Eternal'. Such manifestation would to-day be thought ostentatious,

though it is reached by humility or, what is more likely, not realized.

Nevertheless it is, or should be, inconceivable that so soon after a war we should watch without being shocked the spectacle of Jews and Arabs fighting. It is also, or should be, inconceivable that, having watched the war, Jews and Arabs should themselves fight. Or that anyone should. It is not inconceivable—we have the facts before our eyes. And the preparations round the corner. And if we are not shocked, truly shocked, it is in part because we are tired and, from that, in part because we are blind. And so, together, are too tired to see the truth. Too tired to live 'not by the discipline of external authority but by the inward rule of free devotion to truth'.

Truth we dare not face. It is 'cut', like the nightingale's song; is, indeed, the nightingale's song which we cannot hear. War turns truth to propaganda and from propaganda it is easy to slip to lies. How much truth do we meet with or even expect to-day? 'Yes' means 'no' and 'No' means 'yes, but not for you'. If a firm says they will deliver, or a workman do, something at our house, we know what will happen; not the arrival of the thing or the completion of the job, but a phone message that the house could not be found. This to be followed, as likely as not, by a letter saying that our phone was out of order. If our charlady says with enthusiasm that she will see us to-morrow, we know we must rise betimes to do the chores for see her we shall not. Truth has become a matter of form—a form to be filled up; passed on; evaded; regarded as having nothing to do with reality though it is, indeed, the only.

And all this from fright and the most perverted form of it, power. More people to-day have power than ever before; much power, little power, snippets of footling pettifogging paid power, but power and, what is worse, the desire for it. Fewer have pride, or the desire for that in themselves. 'And' some will say, 'why should we, how can we?', offering the atom as excuse. But the atom, in itself inexcusable, is no excuse. Four years ago we were offered, as well as its horrors, the hopes that its energy might, even would, release. Have we

let ourselves so soon cease to believe in that, in the possibilities of its good, because of the actuality of its evil? Is actuality all we believe in? And if it is, is not the cause of our present discontent—for it is there, as much in the bitterness with which the new—that is interim—world is being patched together as in the muddle which de ceased the old—is not that because we know all we now do, make or plan for will by that atom be outdated? Too obscured by ‘the muddy vesture of decay’ to ‘become transparent to himself’, most of us fail to see that it is only by our inner life we confront the primary reality, that can alone make the world of service, us not slaves.

So to quote Plotinus, and the sermon will be ended. ‘There are different roads by which this end of spiritual apprehension may be reached; the love of beauty which exalts the poet; that devotion to the one and that ascent of science which makes the ambition of the philosopher; that love and those prayers by which some devout and ardent soul tends in its moral purity towards perfection. These are the great highways conducting to that height above the actual and the particular, where we stand in the immediate presence of the Infinite (*Letter to Flaccus*). So, therefore, since ‘as our purpose is, so is our life’, profit by the eight minutes a year we save whizzing through lift-doors, to have time to listen to the nightingale. Nor be so deafened by cinema-organs as not to hear it when we have the time. For its song is silence.

NOTE

On Paradise Lost, by Norman Douglas. At the author’s request, in order to embody further material just come to hand, publication of ‘*On Paradise Lost*’ has been postponed until August.

ERRATUM

The Editor regrets that the play ‘*A Poet’s Day*’, printed in our June issue, having been received in English from M. I. Grünberg, it was assumed the translation was made by him. Credit should have been given to M. Merlin Thomas, to whom we accordingly apologize for delay in acknowledgment.

FROM GOETHE TO FREUD

JOHN URZIDIL

I

GOETHE's era was also the era of Franz Anton Mesmer, the then world-famous physician. The latter's basic ideas became the starting point of Jean Martin Charcot's studies and he, in turn, was the predecessor of Sigmund Freud. 'Mesmerism' in Goethe's time was so widespread that it had a similar effect on the literary and artistic production of his time that Freudianism has nowadays.

Goethe, however, kept himself free from 'Mesmerism'. His inquiries into the soul and into the visible effects of invisible processes were autonomous. 'If I consider the fact,' he wrote in 1820, 'that during my most vivid years Mesmer made so great a sensation, it seems to me rather peculiar that I was never attracted but behaved like a person walking along a river without feeling any desire to take a bath.'

Nevertheless, the observations and experiences of a long lifetime led him occasionally to results which, also far from being 'Mesmerism' and having nothing in common with Mesmer's doctrine of 'animal magnetism', show some astonishing parallels. Thus, for instance, when he said to Eckermann in 1827: 'We all walk among mysteries. We neither know what is stirring in the atmosphere around us, nor how it is connected with our spirit. So much is certain—that at times we can put out the feelers of our soul beyond the limits of the body; and a presentiment, an actual insight into the immediate future, is allowed to us. We all have some electric and magnetic forces within us; and we send forth, like the magnet itself, an attractive or repulsive power, if we come in contact with something similar or dissimilar. In lovers this magnetic power is particularly strong and acts even at a distance.'

The weight and momentous character of the Unconscious

was entirely familiar to Goethe. His master, in that respect had been the philosopher Baruch Spinoza (1632-77). Of Goethe's many statements pertaining to the subject of the Unconscious at least some should be quoted:

'I believe that everything that a man of genius does as a genius is done unconsciously.'

'Consciousness is no sufficient weapon; sometimes it is even dangerous to him who uses it.'

'Man cannot remain in the state of consciousness for a long time; he has to escape again into the Unconscious, for there he roots deeply.'

'Reason offers the least freedom.'

'The heart has secrets of which reason is unaware.'

'Many a thing we would know much better if we would not insist to recognize them too accurately.'

Goethe's poetry, dramatic production, his fictional and scientific writings contain almost innumerable allusions of a similar kind. Thus, for instance, one could refer to the last strophe of the famous song 'An den Mond' (To the Moon). There the poet gives praise to the man who, in communion with a friendly soul, enjoys

What unconscious to men,
Not reflected on,
Through the bossom's labyrinth
Wanders in the night.'

In *Faust*, too, it is the vague impulse, the Unconscious, which is recognized as the very source of acting rightly, provided, of course, that the agent is primarily a moral one.

'A good man, through obscurest aspiration
Has still an instinct of the one true way.'

Being a man of measure and mean Goethe refused to adjudge to the Unconscious all the power and sometimes felt as if he had to warn against such one-sidedness. Pointing at Spinoza he wrote:

'The philosopher whom I highest trust
Proves, if not against all but still the most,
That always instinctively we achieve
The best. We like that and we take it easy.'

It was obviously evident to Goethe that occurrences experienced in early childhood seriously affect the development of human character. He held it, therefore, an essentially educational principle to pay careful attention to such primary events. In *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* one can read the sentence: 'None should think he can overcome the first impressions of his youth.' Elsewhere in that novel early impressions are mentioned 'which are never forgotten, and to which we cannot refuse a certain attachment'. In *Faust* the first great peripetia in the soul of the hero is aroused by the Easter chorus and the Easter bells. A motivation comes from early impressions:

'From childhood up familiar with the note
To life it now renews the old allegiance'

Faust, Werther, Wilhelm Meister, Torquato Tasso (in the drama of the same name), and Eduard (in *Elective Affinities*) incidentally offer very obvious examples of inferiority complexes caused by feelings of frustration. (In the case of Tasso that complexes develop to persecutorial delusion.) One might trace these characters to the early roots of Goethe's own youth and to his student-years in Leipzig. There he suffered his first serious setbacks in love, in his scientific endeavours, and even in poetry when the then-famous poet and professor Christian Fürchtegott Gellert returned to him some of his poems criss-crossed with red-ink corrections.

In *Wilhelm Meister's Travels*, Hersilia tells about the love-of young Felix. She points out that on other occasions, this sort of affection of a younger man to older women seemed to her 'a kind of reminiscence of that nurses'—and infants'—fondness from which they had themselves just torn away'. In the same novel, Jarno explains his predilection for mineralogy as a remainder of childhood-impressions. Incidentally, that predilection played an important part in Goethe's own life as well.

In education as well as in the guidance of nations, Goethe rejected prohibition and bans, calling them barbarities. In *Elective Affinities* he said: 'I for one prefer to tolerate in my surroundings errors and shortcomings as long as I am not in

the position to arrange for the opposite virtues, instead of getting rid of the mistake without being able to put something right in its place.' As a boy he had suffered from the dictatorial and overwhelming temper of his dad. As a young literary adept he became enraged by the poet Christoph Martin Wieland because this otherwise fine and charming gentleman displayed a paternal attitude. 'The father-tone, that was what made me furious,' Goethe exclaimed. Childhood-reminiscences, his father's Italian engravings and narrations were certainly very much responsible for Goethe's lasting desire to visit Italy. As a boy in Frankfurt he liked and directed a marionette-stage. Later in Weimar he became director of the court-theatre. *Faust* stems from a marionette-play. Wilhelm 'Meister's' passionate desire to become a stage-hero is interpreted by his early love for marionettes. First impressions, good or bad ones, determine Goethe's literary characters. It is said in *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (ii, 2): 'A heavy early damage does not straiten itself out; one does not recover from it; one takes it to the grave.'

3

As to the interpretation of dreams, Goethe professed caution, although he knew that dreams are not only a phantastic mess of pleasant arabesques and vexatious nightmares without any meaning. He readily admitted that dreams contain certain elements from which instructive particulars might be gathered concerning the dreamer's character and mind. He used dreams (as in his dramatic works *Egmont*, *Pandora*, *Faust*, and elsewhere) to express some deep processes of the soul. Eckermann, who was a very productive dreamer, often had to tell him about his dreams, of which some very beautiful ones are related in the *Conversations*. It is evident from Goethe's letters that he, too, was sometimes concerned with his own dreams.

He refrained, however, from going to extreme in interpreting and evaluating dream-stuff. As early as 27th December, 1788, he wrote to his friend Johann Gottfried Herder: 'If I only could keep your wife as well as Frau von Stein from that confounded attention to dreams. The realm of dreams is

but a deceptive urn for lots where innumerable blanks are mixed with just a few winning numbers. Oneself becomes a dream, a blank, if one concentrates too intensely on such phantoms.' Goethe's realm, indeed, was the clear day useful for activity and for achieving real results.

In the first act of the second part of *Faust* the hero receives from Mephistopheles the key to what is called the deepest of all secrets. The scene is of a symbolical character and belongs to the darkest but most wonderful enigmas of that drama.

'In solitude are throned Goddesses
No space around them, Place and Time still less;
Only to speak of them embarrasses.
They are *The Mothers*.'

There is no real way to them. They are enthroned in the Unreachable, never to be trodden, in the Unbeseechable, never to be besought. .

'Through endless solitudes shalt thou be drifted . . .'

Faust, taking the key, descends 'from the Created to shapeless forms in liberated spaces'. There in the deepest bottom Mephistopheles promises him to see 'The Mothers'.

'Some in their seats, the others stand or go
At their own will; Formation, Transformation,
The Eternal Minds eternal recreation
Forms of all creatures . . .'

Faust's descent to those secret abyss is interpreted by psychoanalysts as a motive of introversion, i.e. as submersion in, and dream-like return to the primeval state and to the unknown depths of the mother-incest. Goethe, in writing that scene, was probably influenced by certain ideas of Grecian antiquity (in Plutarch's writings) where 'The Mothers' are introduced as Goddesses surrounded by eternity. They represent the elemental forces which rule over all forms, bringing them into existence and causing their many metamorphoses. 'The Mothers' are themselves formless and therefore unreachable creators. Goethe's vision seems to symbolize the return into the lost and long forgotten world of matriarchal rule, a flight into the refuge of the womb.

Sigmund Freud himself quotes the lines (from the wonderful love-poem for Charlotte von Stein)

‘Once in other lifetimes long lived through
You were sister to me or were my wife.’

as evidence of Goethe’s feeling that—as Freud puts it—‘imperishable early affections choose as their subjects persons of their own family-circle’. He points at the mutuality between Orestes and Iphigenie (brother and sister) in Goethe’s drama *Iphigenie auf Tauris* (Iphigenie on Tauris). There ‘an impressive example is offered of an atonement, of the deliverance of a suffering soul from the pressure of guilt through a passionate outbreak of apprehension under the beneficial influence of loving sympathy’. The madness of Orestes who murdered his mother is healed, and his guilt expiated through his confessional union with his beloved sister.

The world-wide excitement caused by Goethe’s *Werther* (first published in 1774) was undoubtedly due to the fact that every reader recognized his own problems. That effect was so deep because the author confronted the reader with a reckless autoanalysis, a violent confession, which exposed the roots of the instinctive life and played it off against the merely conventional conception of legalized sex-relations. Thus the world-wide opposition of bigotry and hypocrisy against Goethe’s earliest masterpiece explains itself.

The striking counterpart to *Werther* were *Elective Affinities*, written thirty-five years later. In that novel it is demonstrated what kind of catastrophe can be caused by the tremendous force of instinctive affections if released without restriction. This time, however, Goethe points not only to the tragic implications caused by emotion and restriction likewise, but, at the same time, to the healing and creative power of resignation, to its individual and social significance. All works of Goethe are, as he himself once declared, ‘fragments of one great confession.’ As to that confessional significance *Elective Affinities* surpass most of his other writings. That novel, too, was attacked because of an alleged ‘immorality’ although the religious keynote is perfectly obvious. The problems of matrimony and divorce are treated in a manner which reveals a certain influence by Roman Catholic ideas. Strongly Protes-

tant readers were annoyed. Conventionalists, whoever they were, felt themselves scandalized in any respect and shuddered at some of the daring sexual motives. The book was charged with wickedness and once again Goethe was the naughty boy.

How could he, in explaining human passions, venture upon truths which, just because they are true are so risky? Imagine the unheard of story of a bedroom-scene between a married couple (Charlotte and Eduard) when both participants focus their amorous sensations not mutually on one another, but each on the dearly desired vision of the instinctively elected and loved person (Eduard on Ottilie, Charlotte on the Captain). That substituting play of instincts reflects itself eventually even in the features of the child which owes its birth to that night. Has any good puritan ever heard of anything like that? In the very erotic poem *Das Tagebuch* (The Diary), probably the most unconstrained piece of Goethe's treatment of sexual instincts, he uses the same motif of substitution: the animation of sexual desire by the imagined intercourse with another than the one actually present partner. There are some editions of Goethe's works which skipped this poem, although it is full of charm, though admittedly of a daring kind. It offers no reading for teen-agers, at least not from the point of view of their parents.

None could expect from a Goethe a mawkish and fulsome romance of 'boy meets girl' with everything ending with a marriage-certificate. He knew too much about the dangerous and even destructive character of instinctive relations. 'Both sexes,' he once said to Riemer, 'are of a certain mutual cruelty which, perhaps, makes itself felt in any individual at times without the possibility of being released.' This sentence already contains ideological elements which later became the chief topics of August Strindberg's sensational dramatic works. The line leads further directly to the plays of the German dramatist Frank Wedekind. *Elective Affinities* contain a short story, *Die wunderlichen Nachbarskinder* (The strange Neighbours-children). In that story mutual hostility of the sexes forms the innermost motif of erotic attraction.

The Father-Daughter-Problem was one of the subjects on which Goethe concentrated time and again. It is embedded in

his dramatic works *Iphigenie*, *Pandora*, and *Die natürliche Tochter* (The Illegitimate Daughter). Mignon, in *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* offers an interesting aspect of that problem. She acts only by instinctive emotions and shows a rather erotic attachment to Wilhelm, the hero of the novel, whom she considers a kind of father and whose own fondness of her takes its course just on the borderline between fatherly love and erotic affection.¹ We find the Father-Daughter-Problem indirectly demonstrated in *Elective Affinities*, too, and directly in *Wilhelm Meister's Travels*. This is especially true of the inserted stories, *Der Mann von fünfzig Jahren* (The man of fifty years) and *Die pilgernde Törin* (The girl-fool pilgrimaging). These narratives originated in Goethe's own personal problems. They were written during a period of his life when, being already advanced in age, he became very fond of young females who could have been his daughters, yes even granddaughters. How shocking, said the puritans, why can't he stick to the old ones? These romances, however, were of a rather innocent character, and all the girls emerged unhurt. It was just that they could boast of having been adored by the great Goethe for a time; that made them quite interesting. Psychologically, these affections arose from Goethe's need for confirmation of his vigour. He wanted to defeat rising climacteric anxieties. In *The man of fifty years* one reads: 'As women are feeling most painfully about the moment when their hitherto undisputed beauty begins to be dubious, thus men of a certain age, although still in their full vigour, become uneasy and almost anxious because of the slightest feeling of insufficient energy.' The man of fifty years is first in love with a very young girl whilst his son adores an elder woman. Later the emotions turn to the opposite, the father begins to feel an attachment to his son's older sweetheart, whereas the son falls in love with the young favourite of

¹ Goethe—as well as SOPHOCLES [in his OEDIPUS-Trigoly—uses the analytical technique of subsequent step by step revealing of facts. Mignon's real father was the harpist Augustin who begetted her with his sister Sperata. This explains basically Mignon's mysterious character, her inhibitions and her peculiar way of acting.

Mignon—like ANTIGONE—being the offspring of incestuous intercourse has to escort her guilt-stained fugitive father through foreign lands to his last resort.

his father. I do not want to go into the details, the development and the solution of the plot, in which nature eventually takes its course. But the problems of generations, of homosexual jealousy and heterosexual passion are raised in that extremely exciting story.

4

Freud's *Psychopathology of the Everyday Life* seems strikingly illustrated by many instances from Goethe's works, especially from *Elective Affinities*. There is Charlotte's behaviour when, against her own desire, she has to write an invitation to the Captain. 'She wrote with a skilled pen, complaisantly and obligingly, in a kind of hurry, however, which was not usual with her; and—what otherwise was not likely to have occurred—eventually she soiled the paper with an inkspot which made her irksome and which enlarged itself still more while she was trying to wipe it out.' Here Goethe explains something seemingly as casual as an inkspot by the unconsciously rejecting attitude of the letter-writer. In addition: Charlotte's husband Eduard also unconsciously feels the deeper meaning of his wife's blunder and immediately tries to deny it in a post-script in which that ominous inkspot is interpreted as just the opposite of what it really is. Eduard calls it a sign of the impatience with which Charlotte expects the addressee's arrival.

Elsewhere in that novel, Eduard offers to Charlotte his opinion about the just-arrived young Ottilie to whom, at first sight, he feels himself unconsciously attached by that 'elective affinity' which supplied the novel with its title. He says about her: 'She is an agreeable and entertaining girl.'—'Entertaining?' answered Charlotte with a smile, 'why, she has not yet opened her mouth!'—'Is that so?' answered Eduard, and seemed to recollect himself, 'that is indeed strange.'—This dialogue, in its brevity, brilliantly characterizes the whole situation. What makes it so psychologically subtle is not only Eduard's unconscious mistake but Charlotte's smile, too, that superior, penetrating, ominous, feminine smile. It was a favourite technique of characterization with Goethe, to expose the Unconscious by pointing at small mistakes apt to disclose the true mind and the real intentions. 'In the married state

one has to quarrel sometimes for then one learns something about the other,' he says in *Elective Affinities*. Otilie, the tragic heroine of that novel, unconsciously uses the same type of handwriting as her beloved Eduard.

A comprehensive study of Goethe as a characterologist would fill volumes. The true connoisseurs of the human soul are, indeed, not so much the scientific psychologists but the great artists and writers. They are the ones who penetrate deeply into the recesses of the Unconscious; and it is sometimes surprising how the greatest writers are in complete accord. A classical instance of conformity is the following one between Goethe and Leo Tolstoi. In *Elective Affinities* one reads the sentence: 'It is only necessary to love one human being most dearly; then all others appear to one amiable at once.' In Tolstoi's *War and Peace*, young Natascha is visiting a ball. She feels happy and in love. Tolstoi describes her state of mind: 'In Natascha's eyes all those who attended the ball were altogether good, amiable, splendid people, and loved one another from the heart. No one was able to hurt anybody, and therefore all of them were bound to be happy.'

5

Even to-day's psychoanalytical therapy was anticipated by Goethe about one hundred years before Freud formulated his system. This can be proved by a letter addressed to Charlotte von Stein on 5th September, 1785, after Goethe's return from K r lsbad, the famous Bohemian Spa. The letter concerns Frau Maria Karoline Herder (the wife of Johann Gottfried Herder, writer and philosopher, who was Goethe's friend). 'Last night,' Goethe relates, 'I played a psychological trick. Mrs. Herder was still under a most hypochondriacal strain about all the disagreeable things that happened to her in Carlsbad. I caused her to tell me about them and to report everything, the ill-behaviour of other people and her own mistakes with the slightest details and consequences, and finally I gave her absolution and jokingly made her to understand under that formula that these things were now bygone and thrown into the deeps of the sea. She herself became quite

cheerful about it, and is now really cured.' The method applied by Goethe in that case certainly agrees with the fundamental technique of psychoanalysis. The patient was induced to recall, to tell, and to relate everything that entered into her mind, she had to report the smallest details and their consequences, she had to go through all free associations in order to lift her Unconscious into the sphere of consciousness and thus obtain relief from her mental suffering.

Goethe was not the only one in his time whose knowledge of psychology anticipated modern scientific achievements and methods. The scientist who deserves to be called the true founding father of psychoanalysis was the Czech scholar Jan Evangelista Purkyně (1787-1869), whose name, strangely enough, is hardly mentioned, and certainly not sufficiently appreciated in the extensive basic writings on psychoanalysis. Purkyně, Goethe's friend and the founder of modern physiology, was the first to adopt the thorough exploration of one's own subjective phenomena which, according to his theory, alone could form the necessary base of any recognition of the human soul in general and of any mental therapy in particular. In short: he asked for the autoanalysis of the analyst. That empirical introspection which is apt to enlighten one's own internal psychic processes and which becomes the essential instrument of the scientific investigator who wants to attain a sound judgment on the world and one's fellow-creatures was called by Purkyně 'Heautognosis' (the art to know one's own self).

Purkyně's psychological merits, moreover, are far-reaching in other fields, too. They coincide with many of Goethe's principles, and show amazing parallels to Freud's modern researches. Purkyně, for instance, was the first to develop and to teach new and basic ideas on the phenomena of sleep, of dream and of the wakened state. He pointed at the great significance of the Unconscious and, like Goethe, called it the creative, formative, and preservative mental force. He clearly interpreted the important part performed in the human mind by memory, recollection, and phantasy. He is to be credited with assigning to the mental processes of association and reproduction their appropriate place in psychology. This vast

complex of research led him to study the myths of primitive tribes. These primeval myths he declared relevant evolutionary elements of the individual soul and of the social mind. In addition, he paid the greatest attention to the psychophysiological occurrences during the development of puberty. There was hardly any physiological, psychological, or moral function of human instincts and impulses outside of the orbit of his researches.

(To modern science Purkyně is known chiefly by the so-called 'Purkyně-Phenomenon'—the fact that in visual fields of different colours of equal brightness, when the intensity of the light is uniformly diminished, the short-wave end of the spectrum grows relatively brighter and the long-wave end relatively darker. Moreover, Purkyně discovered the medullated fibres of the cerebellum and the germ-cell of the egg; he demonstrated the structure of the bones, cartilage, and teeth; of the muscular fibres of the heart and of the composition of the coats of blood-vessels; he was the first to observe that the senses of hearing, smell, and touch can visualize space-perceptions; he searched into the chamber of the eye and became the founder of ophthalmoscopy and microscopic anatomy; he established physiology as an autonomous science by separating it from anatomy. In addition, this universal scholar excelled in translating Goethe's and Schiller's poems into the Czech language, Czech poems into the Polish language, and in writing political pamphlets of a humanitarian and liberal tendency.)

Goethe knew Purkyně from the latter's earliest scientific studies. Purkyně's first treatise (published in Prague in 1819) dealt with inneroptical chromatic phenomena and was based on Goethe's own optical research. It stands to reason that it aroused Goethe's intense interest. Later the young scientist called on him in Weimar and it was partly through Goethe's influence that Purkyně was appointed professor at Breslau University. Goethe went on to study Purkyně's writings with penetrating attention.

It is clear that a scientist of such an extensive domain of activity does not cling solely to empirical methods. Purkyně unified his scientific studies with a central philosophy. That philosophy followed closely Goethe's path. Purkyně assumed that the material world constitutes a unitary living organism which emanates from a spiritual centre. Existence—according

to Purkyně as well as to Goethe—manifests itself as a steady rhythmic correlation of physical and psychical conditions. There is a lasting unity of the soul even where the outward mechanical unity is not plainly apparent. Purkyně's world is kept alive by the principle of transformation—one recalls Goethe's theory of Metamorphosis—and death is not the end of existence, but only a transition in an eternal rebirth of the soul in changing organisms. The course of life, in its individual as well as in its collective aspect, follows a spiritual pattern and design, as can be observed in the life of the individual termite or ant as well as in the respective communities or states built by these insects.

It seems obvious that this sort of idealistic foundation of natural science deviates basically from the scientific materialism of the second half of the nineteenth century in which Freud was born. There is no question that Goethe's synthetic mind would have refused any exclusively analytic interpretation of all natural phenomena. Every science exercises its creative power (which enables it to recognize phenomena) only within certain limits. In transgressing these limits, in trying to make it of absolute and general validity to everything in existence, any doctrine is likely to defeat itself.

This was one of Goethe's fundamental convictions, and even Purkyně himself had to learn a lesson about it. His doctrine of 'Heautognosis', for instance, comprising the principle of the autoanalysis of the scientist, remained acceptable to Goethe as long as it was recommended as one of the many means of research. However, when, in 1827, Purkyně went so far as to establish heautognosis axiomatically as the *conditio sine qua non* of any scientific endeavour, he met Goethe's opposition. Purkyně, at that time, considered it indispensable that every scientist should penetrate even forcibly into his own inner self and into all its particulars. Only thus, he concluded, the distrust against the own senses could be overcome. Moreover, he asserted, psychological conclusions of general validity could be achieved by analysing mentally sick people.

These statements were immediately contested by Goethe. Heautognosis, he polemized, must not discharge itself into self-tormenting, and a research of the human soul should not

be transferred to the hospitals. In *Wilhelm Meister's Travels*, Goethe gives us his clear opinion on that problem. He states: 'The meaning of the sentence: Know your own Self, is simply: Take such care of yourself as to be aware of your relation to the like of you and to the world. No psychological vexations are necessary in order to reach this goal; any sound person knows and learns what it means; it is good advice which is of great practical advantage to everybody.'

Goethe, in that instance as always, presents himself as a man of the mean and of sound common sense. It was the maintenance of the equilibrium, not the lashing out of the extremes which, in his opinion, made thinking effective and exemplary. The world in all its particulars, if seen from one extreme only, undoubtedly offers some interesting features; the contracted perspective and the disarranged proportions may even reveal some unknown facts. But an approximately objective picture can be achieved only from a central position and, to Goethe, only such a picture offered lasting validity.

There is no more sincere adherent to empirical research and practical experience than Goethe. But experience in itself is not just the result of observations and experiments; it is—as the philosopher Immanuel Kant stated—in its deeper conception a product of intellect and discernment. What Goethe refused was any stubborn reliance on empiricism. Salvation could not be expected to come from it exclusively. No sincere scientist can ever submit to any 'either this or that' and ascribe to the materialistic or to the idealistic doctrine a sort of totalitarian command. Man, to Goethe, was always and remained a part of both spheres. That was the meaning of his sentence: 'The finest lot of any thinking man is to search into the Searchable and silently to revere the Unsearchable.' It is noteworthy that this passage is not contained somewhere in Goethe's fiction but in his scientific writings. There—in another connection—he amplifies this idea by stating: 'It becomes one very well to assume the existence of the Unsearchable. It is, on the other hand, one's duty to draw no limits to the searching. For, if Nature enjoys an advantage over man and seems to conceal many things to him, so he, for his part, has the advantage over Nature to be able to think,

if not through it yet over and above it. Our penetrating into Nature, however, has progressed far enough if we reach the primal (original) phenomena, seeing face to face their unfathomable glory; whereupon we may turn back again to the world of appearances where the Inconceivable in its simplicity manifests itself in thousands upon thousands of forms, remaining unvariable in spite of all variability.'

Not long before his death, and shortly after having completed the second part of *Faust*, Goethe wrote to Heinrich W. F. Wackenroder: 'Although we grant nature its secret activity (*encheiresis*) by which life is created and furthered, and although—without being mystics—we eventually admit the existence of something inscrutable, no one who takes these things serious, can refrain from the attempt to struggle with the Inscrutable as hard as possible until he may be satisfied, and admit to himself to be defeated.' (21st January, 1832.)

That 'Inscrutable' and 'Unsearchable' in the centre of material Nature corresponds to the secret of the 'Mothers' in that enigmatic scene of *Faust* II, which had been mentioned already. That 'Inscrutable' and 'Unsearchable' can only be felt and comprised by the means of the Unconscious in the human soul. Yes, the Unconscious itself ranks among the primal phenomena. The admission of their inscrutable character does not make Goethe a mystic. He was, on the contrary, strongly opposed to any mysticism. He had, however, the courage to assume the existence of secrets notwithstanding all empirical science. He drew a line between true secrets and only seeming ones. He thought it the duty of any sincere scientist and, in general, of any thinking individual to make the best use of any scientific progress in order to unveil the seeming secrets and thus to isolate the true ones. These ought to be approached through a purified atmosphere. To respect them does in no way disavow the scientist. It constitutes, on the contrary, the essence of his sincerity.

It is clear from what was said and quoted that Goethe welcomed any kind of progress, any new invention or discovery. There was no new apparatus or scientific implement which had not attracted his closest interest and attention. The seeming secrets should be unveiled by any means available

to honest research. Such effort alone can clear the path to true religion, which is nothing else but the reverent relation of man—humbly conscious of his limitations—to the Inscrutable and Eternal. It is the key to the 'Mothers', but not offered by Mephistopheles. It is forged by the man 'whoe'er aspires unweariedly' and who, according to the finale of *Faust*, is not beyond redeeming.

'And if he feels the grace of Love
That from On High is given,
The Blessed Hosts, that wait above,
Shall welcome him to Heaven.'

. It was Goethe's conviction that mankind is intrinsically progressing and that, therefore, the limits of recognizance are in a state of continuous shifting. Consequently, even religion progresses in its forms, whilst its central principles remain unaffected. This process is an endless one, for there will always remain an inscrutable sphere, notwithstanding all scientific achievements. Thus religion stands as an inherent exigency of human nature. No less inherent is man's desire for more knowledge and learning.

„In Goethe's poetry and fiction the Unsearchable appears in many forms and visions. Sometimes, as for instance in *Faust*, in some of his poems and fairy-tales, it assumes even a magic character. This magic, however, is in no way a mystagogic dallying. It either is of a symbolical meaning or it is, as in *Faust*, the conscious human effort to make the Supernatural agree with the sensual world. If the Supernatural can be made a palpable manifestation, it may enter the orbit of human recognizance. It is notable that in the second part of *Faust* magic has eventually to yield to the progressive work for the community: the drama ends with a triumph of—religion. According to Goethe's own words to Eckermann (June, 1831), *Faust* represents 'an ever higher and purer form of activity to the end, the eternal Love coming down to his aid from above. This is entirely in harmony with our religious ideas, according to which we are not alone saved by our strength, but through the freely bestowed Grace of God'.

The ideal power by which life, in its inmost recesses, is held together seems to be indicated by Goethe's conviction that

everything in existence has, at the same time, an abstract symbolical meaning. On 12th April, 1818, in a letter to Karl Ernst Schubarth, he wrote: 'Whatever happens is a symbol, and in manifesting itself perfectly it points to everything else.' This sentence accentuates by the words 'whatever happens' the dynamic character of the world which is developing steadily. In that respect not only Nature but mankind in general and the individual in particular, too, is considered something that 'happens'. However, 'whatever happens,' is not merely or exclusively a symbol; it is, simultaneously, acknowledged as an active, substantiated reality. (Thus Goethe warns of exaggerating the symbolical side of existence which must not be derogatory to useful action.) Only if reality is in the state of manifesting itself perfectly (of demonstrating its whole real and symbolical contents) it is apt to point at (to interpret) all the rest. As far as mankind is concerned, Goethe's sentence establishes personal and individual values as presuppositions of world-continuity.

The symbolical character of everything real or, to use Goethe's phrase, of 'whatever happens' plays a decisive part in Freud's theories. To Goethe, it was evident that this symbolical character is one of the outstanding means to understand facts and events. It is, to be sure, the human mind itself which bestows on the world its symbolical contents and which produces the whole picture of the world, the things and ideas, not only in their factual but, at the same time, in their symbolical existence. The world we are living in is a human one, notwithstanding its assumed objectivity. It can be made discernible to us only by human means and by man's own power. Consequently, all knowledge has to start with the knowledge of man's own character and mind, that conspicuous instrument of all research and all perception of the world. In that respect Purkyně was basically right. No less right, however, was Goethe in drawing a firm line and refusing any exaggerated effort of introspection as a dangerous atomizer and dissolvent of the very instruments of perception.

THE DUCHESS OF NAXOS

BRYHER

A POSSIBLE though tenuous link between an Adriatic romance and *The Merchant of Venice* was suggested to me through a casual reading of W. Miller's *The Latin Orient* (Cambridge, 1921) and the editor's article on plays at Stratford in the April issue of *Life and Letters*.

The Merchant of Venice is a difficult play for modern audiences. The character of Shylock is ambiguous, we are never certain whether it is an early approach to race problems (contemporary events were an alleged plot to poison Queen Elizabeth, the rising of the apprentices against a handful of foreign refugees falsely linked to continuous increases in the price of food) or simply Shakespeare drawing the stock Elizabethan villain. There is the poetry of the night at Belmont but Antonio is too exaggerated, Bassanio too recklessly inconsiderate to evoke our sympathy. Apart from Shylock the play depends on Portia, yet the casket scenes to-day creak with folk-lore and usually embarrass the spectator.

It is too easy to write books producing a dozen sources for so simple a statement as that the dog bayed at the moon. Critics ignore the working of creative genius. I do not want to ~~join~~ their ranks because I suggest that it was possible for Shakespeare wandering beside the Thames to have heard from an Elizabethan sailor the sad story of the lady of Naxos with her three suitors.

Do we realize to-day how deeply sixteenth-century London was linked to the Levant? We are still not over 'the Discovery', we think of Drake instinctively, not Shirley. It was not so in the years of Shakespeare's childhood, the innkeeper's sack, silk, so necessary for a gallant's clothes, spices that took the place of our refrigerators, came chiefly from the East. The primary object of the voyagers was a new route to India but until it was found, our traditional trade was centred upon the Mediterranean ports.

Fiorenza became Duchess of Naxos on the death of her father in 1361. Already a widow with a baby son, she was still very young. Naxos was a rich island, full of vineyards, with a good harbour and an important link between Venice and Crete. The seas were full of pirates, the Turks were creeping up the Adriatic and Venice and Genoa were at the height of their struggle for supremacy of the Levant.

‘Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth,
for the four winds blow in from every coast
Renowned suitors, and her sunny locks
Hang on her temples like a golden fleece;
Which makes her seat of Belmont Colchos’ strand,
and many Jasons come in quest of her.’

Act I, Sc. 2.

It was essential for her to remarry if she wished to keep her island, it was equally to the interest of Venice to see that she married a man favourable to their aims.

Her first suitor was a man to whom gold was supremely important. He was a wealthy Genoese merchant and Fiorenza immediately received a warning not to marry him. Her refusal meant death for some time to the hopes of any extension of Genoese influence in that part of the world. He received, indeed, a skull in place of a portrait.

The second suitor was a more interesting man. He was Nerio Acciajuoli, a young Florentine who was a born leader but despised by many nobles who considered him an adventurer. Subsequently he became, by conquest, Duke of Athens. The Duchess was thought to favour his suit, a fresh blow to Venetian hopes, for they were rightly suspicious that Nerio aimed at complete independence. ‘Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves’ would have been no bad epitaph for him for Nerio’s life was a series of spectacular ups and downs, nor, though he himself was Florentine, must we forget that Aragon for a time controlled part of the Greece in which he lived.

Venice decided to take no chances. The Duchess was kidnapped, taken to Crete in a fast galley and left there until she agreed to marry her cousin, Nicolo Sanudo of Euboea, the Venetian nominee. His nickname was ‘Spezzabanda’, the

dispenser of a host, he was a good fighter who defended Naxos not only during the lifetime of the Duchess but after her death until her son by the first marriage came of age. It would be easy to see Bassanio in him, the typically generous, reckless adventurer to whom perhaps fidelity to his comrades in arms was the main virtue of life.

That is all there is to the story; a lady, three choices, Genoa, Aragon-Greece, and Venice; nothing, you will say, upon which to build a weighty theory worthy of inclusion as a footnote. Agreed, my masters, but in a day that can present Hamlet as the young Werther against a background of Crimean uniforms or alternatively, shorn of a soliloquy and sans Rosen-cranz and Guildenstern, am I not nearer the phantastical age, have I not a right to my Humour, if I see Shakespeare wandering to the Thames, after a hot day at the Globe, to sit under the trees with an old captain who falls to mumbling ~~over~~ his cup of Candy, 'didst ever hear the pitifull ballat of the faire Duchess of Naxos and her three suitors' or if you are out of love with such toys and had rather go roistering, 'the new jigge of how a young gallant of Venice cozened the worthy Genoese merchant and a Prince of Greece to win the young Widowe.'

Either would lead to talk of the Moors, the perils of piracy, the scent of strange island-shrubs under the moon, the inexplicable rise in the cost of wine, the casual exchange of opinions of any ordinary day in London. The incident itself might have been forgotten or remembered only as an unimportant, transitory experience yet who shall say what name, what detail, what fragment of a story, falling into that deep undersea realm where much of poetry has its being, did not drift back to the surface of the mind when Shakespeare began another drama, *The Merchant of Venice*?

PROVISIONAL VALUES

DENIS BOTTERILL

NORMAN NICHOLSON. *Rock Face*. Faber. 7s. 6d.

EWART MILNE. *Boding Day*. Muller. 7s. 6d.

AGNES E. MACKAY. *The Secret Country*. Fortune Press. 6s.

DEREK STANFORD. *Music for Statues*. Routledge. 5s.

MAURICE JAMES CRAIG. *Some Way for Reason*. Heinemann. 6s.

W. G. ARCHER. *The Plains of the Sun*. Routledge. 10s. 6d.

FRANCIS BERRY. *Murdock and Other Poems*. Dakers. 5s.

WILLIAM JEFFREY. *Sea Glimmer*. Maclellan. 6s.

DOUGLAS YOUNG. *A Braird O Thristles*. Maclellan. 7s. 6d. . -

IN *Friday Nights*, a collection of his own reviews and comments on the contemporary scene published in 1922, Edward Garnet writes: 'The critic cannot hope to do more than fix a provisional value on the literature of his day.'

That statement, together with one made by Coleridge in *Biographia Literaria* . . . ' . . . not the poem we read, but that to which we return, with the greatest pleasure, possesses the genuine power, and claims the name of essential poetry,' tempt me to ask just how provisional is my valuation of the books under review, and to how many of the poems in them I shall return 'with the greatest pleasure' in the years to come.

I hazard that fewer than half these writers will be remembered at all; and that the others will certainly be forgotten by me.

* * * *

Norman Nicholson—and not only on account of the company in which he finds himself—shows up well. I am responsive to *Rock Face* not because I recognize his landscapes, but because he often interprets *my* landscapes far more successfully than I can myself, and there is neither shoddiness

nor showiness about his craftsmanship. Of *The Tame Hare* he writes:

'She came to him in dreams—her ears
Diddering like antennæ, and her eyes
Wide as dark flowers where the dew
Holds and dissolves a purple hoard of shadow.'

And, *For Emily Brontë*:

'Snow is not cold, nor soft, nor white,
But gold as steel when the earth's husk
Blossoms like blackthorn in the bright
Blood-streaming sun of winter dusk'

Both quotations suggest to me the Poet; that person who—to quote W. H. Auden—'is passionately in love with language.' Suggests the Poet kneading and moulding his material, working hard as Epstein or Moore, furiously as Balzac, in order to transmute the stuff he loves into something which may endure when his own clay is become cold.

Norman Nicholson looks at things with a clear eye, and writes of what he sees; and he fulfills an exhortation made by Geoffrey Grigson in 1938 who said:

'Look for objects: the only poets who can go beyond them are those who have seen them, and checked and criticized the impression they have made upon them.'

And—

'...the one loneliness which is justified is Rilke's loneliness surrounded by everything thorough, exact, without slovenliness, impressionable and honest.'

But when Ewart Milne in *Boding Day* writes of *The Organ Grinder*.

'I offer you a wheezy kerbstone tune
I made it for this child who's smiling as I play,
But she is smiling running from the organ man
With his monkey and his creaking songs of yesterday.'

I find myself back in the worst sloughs of pre-1914 English

verse. Banality stares glassily from many of his verses, but in some lines:

‘Then most midnight in my blood
You rose like a salmon gliding through a pool. . . .’

or:

‘Were not the dead so clamorous
I’d love you as the sun must love the may,
Or unfrocked orchards of an earlier spring. . . .’

there seems to lurk (besides banality) the authentic voice of the poet.

And that is more than I can say for Agnes E. Mackay’s *The Secret Country*. Even if we forget the loose structure of her verse, overlook the triteness of her themes, we are still faced with:

‘. . . fecund solitude!
Swept by long tides of luminous magnitude
Tumultuous waves of wind, in quietude
Barren to sun’s appeal. . . .’

and:

‘How red the rose!
Across the dew-washed years. . . .’

and when I turn to Miss Mackay’s two-page *Introduction For the Common Reader* I get this:

‘. . . the composition of ideas is like the composition of a painting, harmonized round the central motif without divorcing the idea from the sound-shape. . . . Each poem has its own sound-shape, fluid to its special needs, and is a complete musical composition as well as an integral plastic form.’

I defy anybody to make sense of a fluid sound-shape with an integral plastic form (Common-reader or not)—or of the rest of Miss Mackay’s pretentious Introduction.

With *Music For Statues* by Derek Stanford we are back again with the poets, though the book would have been better for the omission of a silly blurb. For here is a poet who is impressive as he is impressionable; yet his book appears with this statement on the cover:

‘He would describe himself as a neo-romantic somewhat influenced by French symbolism and, figuratively speaking, would like to wed

the Eiffel Tower of modern verse with the lily and the rose of romantic literature.'

He does not seem to have mastered the contortions necessary to produce this hybrid, but sometimes a welcome sense of humour comes to his rescue and peeps from under the cloak of romanticism he so easily assumes. Here is:

Private Autumn

'Drinking the orange sun in cloudy cider
While the pub fire frets like a fire-work on the hearth,
I wonder what you with your head of a coiffed chrysanth
Would make of October in the Public Gardens.'

He has affinities, too, with the surrealists, but I shall remember him more as a maker of symbols. When he writes:

'Who is it rides with me
down these sun-petalled lanes?
Who is it paces beside me
shoulder to shoulder—
invisible understanding
shorn of a tongue?

and finishes the curiously haunting poem with:

'Are you my childhood or my early loves,
or the sombre fancy-dress of a thousand pasts?
I cannot guess;
nor know you to disown you,
In whose presence
I am most alone.'

I am aware that a genuine poet is making every endeavour to communicate an intense personal experience which has significance for others. And when he says:

'Written at midnight in an empty room,
the fire a cindered sun, the gaslight harsh,
the walls a sort of antiseptic green,
mirror—a lamp-splashed puddle, fog-thick pool—
chair, table, stool—etceteras of ennui.'

the mood is recognizable, but later in the same poem he plasters it with 'Star-sweet rain', 'Thresh of wheels,' 'Taxis hooting like a swarm of gulls,' 'Trombone thunders of a roaring bus' and 'Curl-papered pig-tails of untidy talk.'

I might, in sentimental mood, defend 'Star-sweet rain' but the rest is a clever young man showing off.

Maurice James Craig's *Some Way For Reason* is so carefully wrought that all temper is gone from it. He achieves something of the chiselled verse-perfection of Savage Landor but brings to poetry very little of himself. I am chary of using the phrase 'Poetry born of an inner necessity,' but such poetry (even when it is not good) has a quality of insistence so lacking in Maurice Craig who has pruned himself of all emotion but wit.

This—of which I think highly—is a fair quotation:

'High on a ridge of tiles
A cat, erect and lean
Looks down and slyly smiles;
The pointed ears are keen
Listening for a sound
To rise from the back-yard:
He casts upon the ground
A moment's cold regard.

Whatever has occurred
Is on so small a scale
That we can but infer
From the trembling of the tail
And the look of blank surprise
That glares out of the eyes
That underneath black fur
His face is deadly pale.'

Next is W. G. Archer's *The Plains of the Sun* of which his publishers claim that the symbolism of primitive Indian poetry underlies his presentation of the modern scene.

Knowing nothing of primitive Indian poetry or its symbolism, I am at a disadvantage. But I suspect lines such as the following have little to do with it. They seem to me to be inventions of a disorderly imagination—an imagination which has nothing to do with the divine 'madness' we associate with Blake, Smart, or John Clare:

'Why did you send me a bewildered bird?
And why did you reply with the diagram of a navel?
I threw the bible in the bush
And waited for the missing stranger.

PROVISIONAL VALUES

I analysed the nodules of an oak
And put the spider in the sky
I took the white bowels in my hand
And led the tiger from the hill.'

Nor could I find anything which might pass for a 'presentation of the modern scene', though it is true I must be grateful to him for this lovely line:

'I request the pleasure of your body'

Even if Miss Otis regrets, I hope, for Mr. Archer's sake she does not always answer with a negative.

By virtue of its dedicatory poem *To Florence*, Francis Berry's *Murdock and Other Poems* may claim to fulfill Coleridge's dictum concerning essential poetry. But elsewhere he has a curious use of capital-letters which I find irritating. There seems no absolute necessity for their use in the title-poem:

'We of this Village know our heavy Wood
Haunted by Brothers in their furious Mood:
Two Brothers, locked and pledged to nightly Duel,
Fight under Trees, hidden at fullest Moon.
Though dumb, their Blows do toss upon the Gale,
Their Groans disturb us at our Murdock Fires,
Their sobs are heard through Falls of Autumn Rain,
And Cudgel-Blows between the Thunder Roars
Come groaning out from Oak and Clumps of Beech. . .'

Some critics have called such writing 'Gothic', 'Craggy,' 'Fierce' and the like. But to me the mannerism is a throw-back to Stephen Duck, and I see no reason for the resurrection of eighteenth-century oddity even in a poem which makes a Crabbe-like progress towards narrative.

The dedication, however, is another matter and better illustrates Francis Berry's powerful imagination:

To Florence

'She all craters, mountains, cunning woods,
All tiger-lillies hastening one same hour
To flash their tongues against the gong-gold sun;

She all fountains, cities, all coronas
Rippling from her moon all running rings
To ride in palpitation all my dawn;

DENIS BOTTERILL

She each grown, each tightly-folded rose
Fuse set for red explosion in our June
And flash of rare aromas all unknown;

She all gateways, tunnels, cries and days;
All dangers, seasons, flags; all crops all wines—
And all her bright flamingos flock my noon.

All nations she, all dead, all living; those to come
Under her holy arch will pass my all-loved home.'

My last two books are published in the *Poetry Scotland* series which has already done good work by exhibiting a number of poets who might otherwise have been severely localized. But I am still unconvinced that work written in Scots vernacular can have more than a local public.

William Jeffrey is easy on our English ears and few would deny the charm of *She's a Fey Young Thing* from the post-humous volume *Sea Glimmer*:

'She's a fey young thing
When the lips o' spring
Dispute with the winds to love her;

She's a douce wise lass
While the lang days pass
And the sun's in power above her. . . '

But when it comes to *In midmost winter in the wild Atlantic* and several other longer poems of his, I feel that language has mastered him and not he language:

'The sequent motion of mechanic footsteps'

or

'Created in an artery's pulsation'

are horrible examples of bad versification, and William Jeffrey was lavish with such nonsense:

'The mind of man, by a native hypostasis,
May hover in cerulean peace. . . '

And this:

'Emergent from thunder-hammering and downward-hurling of
precipitant fall

Space of an amplitude gigantic fashioned our mountains and forest. . . .'

Even if such lines avoid being Satan Montgomery they are fortunate if they escape the attentions of a Macaulay.

He could write good verse in a minor key and it was only when he bestrode a Pegasus too spirited for him that he rode to a fall. Here is *Song* which, in spite of a bad middle verse, better illustrates his talent:

'There is a swan in the water
Tranced in the shine of stone,
Withdrawn, companionless,
Dreaming in snow alone.

The mountains bend upon him
Their sentient influence,
And earth in him aspires
Beyond life's transience.

But touch him, lo! his marble
Shivers in spirals of power,
His mortal flesh in swirls of light
Remembers Leda's hour.

As for Douglas Young, he must speak for himself. He provides the data (fortunately) in footnotes, so it can be set out in mathematical fashion. The proposition is this:

If,

hairst = autumn; dwynin = dwindling;
voar = spring; schene = brilliance;
dowie = melancholy; mosardrie = meditation;
spreit = spirit:

and if,

vivuallie = vividly; twynin = separation;
viver = more vivid; convene = meeting

find the meaning of:

Frae the Russian O Pushkin

Dearer the fleurs o hairst's dwynin
nor voar's first flourischan schene.
They wauken dowie mosardrie
in ilk ane's spreit mair vivuallie.
Een sae, whiles, the hour o twynin
is viver nor a new convene.

DENIS BOTTERILL

That is what I had in mind when I wrote that I was not convinced that poems in the Scots vernacular would command more than a limited local public.

POEM

My covered stomach I unstomach
My inner self I fortify
A stronger manhood I take on
My very soul I mortify.

The little Jesus hanging by
The little Jesus in a heap
Woman and man in man doth die
The little Jesus fast asleep.

GEORGE CAMPBELL

POETRY

FROM THE TRUE CONFESSION
OF GEORGE BARKER

Almighty God, by whose ill will
I was created with conscience;
By whose prolonged malevolence
I shall be sustained until
My afflictions fulfill
His victories; by whose dispensation
Whatever I have had of sense
Has obfuscated my salvation—

Good God, grant that, in reviewing
My past life, I may remember
Everything I did worth doing
Seemed rather wicked in persuing:
Grant, good God, I shall have remitted
Those worldly pleasures beyond number
I necessarily omitted
Exhausted by the ones committed.

Good God, let me recollect
Your many mercies, tall and short,
The blousy blondes, the often necked,
And those whom I should not have thought
Given wisely to me; nor let forget
My grateful memory the odd
Consolers, too frequently brunette,
Who charged me for your mercies, God.

Good God, let me so recall
My grave omissions and commissions
That I may repent them all,
—The places, faces and positions;
Together with the few additions
A feeble future may install.
Good God, only mathematicians
Could reel 'em off in the numeral.

POETRY

Good God, so wisely you provided
The loving heart I suffer with,
That I am constantly divided
By a deep love for all beneath
Me. Every man knows well
He rides his own whores down to hell
But, good God, every knackered horse
Was, originally, yours.

Good God, receive my thanksgiving
For all the wonders I have seen
(And all the blunders in between)
In my thirty odd years of living.
I have seen the morning rise,
And I have seen the evening set—
Anything different would surprise
Me even more profoundly yet.

I confess, My God, this lonely
Derelict of a night, when I
And not the conscious I only
Feel all the culpability—
(But the simple and final fact
That we are better than we act,
For this fortunate windfall
We are not responsible at all)—

I confess, my God, that in
The hotbed of the monkey sin
I saw you through a blaze of hair
Standing lonely as a mourner
Silent in the bedroom corner
Knowing you need not be there.
I saw the genetic man had torn
A face away from your despair.

Good God, receive my gratitude
For favours undeserved; accept
This truly heartfelt platitude:

POETRY

You gave me too much latitude
And so I hanged myself. I kept
Your mercy, good God, in a box,
But out at midnight Justice crept
And axed me with a paradox.

O lovingkindness of the knife
That cuts the proud flesh from the rotten
Bone and cuts the rotten life
Out of the rotten bone. No, not an
Ounce of sparrow is forgotten
As that butchering surgeon cuts
And rummages among my guts
To succour what was misbegotten.

I confess, my God, my good,
I have not wholly understood
The nature of our holiness:
The striking snake errs even less
Not questioning; the physicist
Not asking why all things exist
Serves better than those who advance a
Question to which life's the answer.

But, O my God, the human purpose,
If at all I can perceive
A purpose in the life I live,
Is to hide in the glass horse
Of our doubt until the pity
Of heaven opens up a city
Of absolute belief to us,
Because our silence is hideous.

And our doubt more miserable
Than certainty of the worst would be.
Like infinitely pitiable
Ghosts who do not even know
That waver between reality
And unreality, we go
About our lives and cannot see
Even why we suffer so.

POETRY

I know only that the heart
 Doubting every real thing else
Does not doubt the voice that tells
 Us that we suffer. The hard part
At the dead centre of the soul
 Is an age of frozen grief
No vernal equinox of relief
 Can mitigate, and no love console.

Then, O my God, by the hand
 This star-wandering grief takes
The world that does not understand
 Its own miseries and mistakes
And leads it home. Not yet, but later
 To lean an expiated head
On the shoulder of a creator
 Who knows where all troubles lead.

THE SCORPION

PAUL BOWLES

AN old woman lived in a cave which her sons had hollowed out of a clay cliff near a spring, before they went away to the town where many people live. She was neither happy nor unhappy to be there, because she knew that the end of life was near and that her sons would not be likely to return, no matter what the season. In the town there are always many things to do, and they would be doing them, not caring to remember the time when they had lived in the hills looking after the old woman.

At the entrance to the cave at certain times of the year there was a curtain of water-drops through which the old woman had to pass to get inside. The water rolled down the bank from the plants above and dripped on to the clay below. So the old woman accustomed herself to sitting crouched in the cave for long periods of time in order to keep as dry as possible. Outside, through the moving beads of water, she saw the bare earth lighted by the grey sky, and sometimes large dry leaves went past, pushed by the wind that came from higher parts of the land. Inside, where she was, the light was pleasant and of a pink colour from the clay all around.

A few people used to pass from time to time along the path not far away, and because there was a spring near by those travellers who knew that it existed, but not just where it was, would sometimes come near to the cave before they discovered that the spring was not there. The old woman would never call to them. She would merely watch them as they came near and suddenly saw her. Then she would go on watching as they turned back and went in other directions looking for the water to drink.

There were many things about this life that the old woman liked. She was no longer obligated to argue and fight with her sons to make them carry wood to the charcoal oven. She was free to move about at night and look for food. She could eat

everything she found without having to share it. And she owed no one any debt of thanks for the things she had in her life.

One old man used to come from the village on his way down to the valley, and sit on a rock just distant enough from the cave for her to recognize him. She knew he was aware of her presence in the cave there, and although she probably did not know this, she disliked him for not giving some sign that he knew she was there. It seemed to her that he had an unfair advantage over her and was using it in an unpleasant way. She thought up many ideas for annoying him if he should ever come near enough, but he always passed by in the distance, pausing to sit down on the rock for some time, when he would often gaze straight at the cave. Then he would continue slowly on his way, and it always seemed to the old woman that he went more slowly after his rest than before it.

There were scorpions in the cave all year round, but above all during the days just before the plants began to let water drip through. The old woman had a huge bundle of rags, and with this she would brush the walls and ceiling clear of them, stamping quickly on them with her hard, bare heel. Occasionally a small wild bird or animal strayed inside the entrance, but she was never quick enough to kill it, and she had given up trying.

One dark day she looked up to see one of her sons standing in the doorway. She could not remember which one it was, but she thought it was the one who had ridden the horse down the dry river bed and nearly been killed. She looked at his hand to see if it was out of shape. It was not that son.

He began to speak: 'Is it you?'

'Yes.'

'Are you well?'

'Yes.'

'Is everything well?'

'Everything.'

'You stayed here?'

'You can see.'

'Yes.'

There was a silence. The old woman looked around the cave and was displeased to see that the man in the doorway made

it practically dark in there. She busied herself with trying to distinguish various objects: her stick, her gourd, her tin can, her length of rope. She was frowning with the effort.

The man was speaking again.

'Shall I come in?'

She did not reply.

He backed away from the entrance, brushing the water drops from his garments. He was on the point of saying something profane, thought the old woman who, even though she did not know which one this was, remembered what he would do.

She decided to speak.

'What?' she said.

He leaned forward through the curtain of water and repeated his question.

'Shall I come in?'

'No.'

'What's the matter with you?'

'Nothing.'

Then she added: 'There's no room.'

He backed out again, wiping his head. The old woman thought he would probably go away, and she was not sure she wanted him to. However, there was nothing else he could do, she thought. She heard him sit down outside the cave, and then she smelled tobacco smoke. There was no sound beside the dripping of water upon the clay.

A short while later she heard him get up. He stood outside the entrance again.

'I'm coming in,' he said.

She did not reply.

He bent over and pushed inside. The cave was too low for him to stand up in it. He looked about and spat on the floor.

'Come on,' he said.

'Where?'

'With me.'

'Why?'

'Because you have to come.'

She waited a little while, and then said suspiciously: 'Where are you going?'

He pointed indifferently toward the valley, and said:
'Down that way.'

'In the town?'

'Farther.'

'I won't go.'

'You have to come.'

'No.'

He picked up her stick and held it out to her.

'To-morrow,' she said.

'Now.'

'I must sleep,' she said, settling back into her pile of rags.

'Good. I'll wait outside,' he answered, and went out.

The old woman went to sleep immediately. She dreamed that the town was very large. It went on for ever and its streets were filled with people in new clothes. The church had a high tower with several bells that rang all the time. She was in the streets all one day, surrounded by people. She was not sure whether they were all her sons or not. She asked some of them: 'Are you my sons?' They could not answer, but she thought that if they had been able to they would have said: 'Yes.' Then, when it was night, she found a house with its door open. Inside there was a light and some women were seated in a corner. They rose when she went in and said: 'You have a room here.' She did not want to see it, but they pushed her along until she was in it, and closed the door.

She was a little girl and she was crying. The bells of the church were very loud outside, and she imagined they filled the sky. There was an open space in the wall high above her. She could see the stars through it, and they gave light to her room. From the reeds which formed the ceiling a scorpion came crawling. He came slowly down the wall toward her. She stopped crying and watched him. His tail curved up over his back and moved a little from side to side as he crawled. She looked quickly about for something to brush him down with. Since there was nothing in the room she used her hand. But her motions were slow, and the scorpion seized her finger with his pinchers, clinging there tightly although she waved her hand wildly about. Then she realized that he was not going to sting her. A great feeling of happiness went through her. She

raised her finger to her lips to kiss the scorpion. The bells stopped ringing. Slowly, in the peace which was beginning, the scorpion moved into her mouth. She felt his hard shell and his little clinging legs going across her lips and her tongue. He crawled slowly down her throat and was hers. She woke up and called out.

Her son answered: 'What is it?'

'I'm ready.'

'So soon?'

He stood outside as she came through the curtain of water, leaning on her stick. Then he began walking a few paces ahead of her toward the path.

'It will rain,' said her son.

'Is it far?'

'Three days,' he said, looking at her old legs.

She nodded. Then she noticed the old man sitting on the stone. He had an expression of deep surprise on his face, as if a miracle had just occurred. His mouth was open as he stared at the old woman. When they came opposite the rock he peered more intently than ever into her face. She pretended not to notice him. As they picked their way carefully downhill along the stony path they heard the old man's thin voice behind them, carried by the wind.

'Good-bye.'

'Who is that?' said her son.

'I don't know.'

Her son looked back at her darkly.

'You're lying,' he said.

POETRY

THE LOSS

BY VERNON WATKINS

I think men should, renouncing purse and scrip,
Learn self-denial, true love, and fellowship.
What sceptic taught me, then, this loss I feel
Close to my conscience, and its golden seal?

Entranced I lay, listening where waters flowed,
Supine on Summer's bank, with resting shoulders.
Just then the sun, who steals superfluous gold,
Rolled down my wallet to retentive boulders.

How did I learn this walk of curious stealth,
As of a mantis, one who preys on wealth?
Ah fork of lives, each moment we are tested.
Had I lived poor, I had not been molested.

On this green bank all innocent I lay,
I with my wealth, in love with life and day.
I rose, and cheated felt, the price being paid,
Nature turned whore, that I had thought a maid.

I look on these two streams and wonder which
Withholds my loss; and now I see the ditch.
Now, that being trodden, puts my mind in doubt
Which was the nearer stream when I stretched out.

Who would have guessed that on a day so sunny
So keen a grief could come from loss of money?
Or that I'd kneel to every tuft and clod,
In each acknowledging a pagan god?

POETRY

I, though involved in greater mysteries,
Would yet be certain where that wealth now is
Which made my pocket heavy with a weight
Various in fantasy, though fixed in state.

For certainty I grope through nettle leaves
Where every shadow seems a place of thieves.
At last my hand to something weighty clings,
And is rewarded by a stone and stings.

I hate this most, this tantalizing power
To trace my life back through a wasted hour
Until it stops where ripples counterfeit
The flashing treasure that slipped through my feet.

Come forth, you giants of the stream who mine
Perdition; make my sunken wonder shine.
How many hostages must I supply
While you dispute, observing hair and eye?

Wisdom I had until an hour ago,
Peace and good temper; under stream they flow.
Are all my faculties for ransom gone
And would you still have more, and let me drown?

Remorse becomes the centre of my space.
I have one path, one circle, and each place
Beckons me further, like a new decoy,
Knowing my loss exactly hides my joy.

Suspicion rises everywhere I look.
I cannot trust the root, the stone, the brook.
It seems each moved a little in my sleep,
But now, resolving its new place to keep,

Confuses more the spot where I lay down.
Nature might still be sweet, did little crown
The total loss; but now her taste is sour.
The canker burns: I cannot love the flower.

POETRY

Gold in the reeds the iris at my feet
Breeds a new fever from the tranquil heat.
All know my secret, and all play with me,
The birds, the leaves, the grass, and that sly tree.

The fumbling beetle, feeling for his track,
Groping through stems, a load upon his back,
Moves with a miser's perfect mimicry,
Giving close earth a closer scrutiny

He lies upon his back, wretched as I
Whom forfeit has reduced to misery
With all the gambling heads of Babylon,
A rope their tether, and their god a stone.

FEW THINGS TO-NIGHT ARE SAFE

by OSWELL BLAKESTON

Phantom pink rides on the moor,
at sea the walrus flings
on waves above the heads of men
in flimsy ships;
Few things on this wild night are safe
save for the flesh of dappled mare
dug deep to nourish the farmer's vine,
save for the horns the reindeer shed and ate,
nibbling shards of velvet bone,
and for opals
in a lead coffin
in a secret place.

THE EXPLORING BOTANISTS

WINIFRED GRAHAM WILSON

THERE is ample material to whet one's curiosity, though unfortunately not nearly enough to satisfy it, in a reference Fynes Moryson makes to Cumberland, which he visited in the summer of 1598. This is what he says: 'The Empericke Surgeons (that is, of experience without learning) of Scotland come yeerely to those fields of the borders, to gather hearbes, good to heale wounds, and planted there by the bordering souldiers of the Romans, the vertue of which herbs they wonderfully extoll.'¹

And there, Fynes Moryson leaves the matter, but there we only begin to take it up. Who exactly were those *Empericke Surgeons*? Where did they live? And on what principle did they select the herbes they so wonderfully extolled? Perhaps, like Jean Fernel, they believed that 'the benevolence of the Creator had placed amongst the herbs of each country some which were the natural remedies for the diseases existent there. All that was needed was to find out which those herbs were. Though, even when found, long experience with them would be necessary to know how to use them successfully.'² Or perhaps they went even further and held that 'God hath imprinted upon the Plants, Herbs and Flowers as it were in Hieroglyphics the very signature of their vertues',³ and for that difficult-to-decipher signature they would be ever on the look-out.

Others would be on the look-out too, for herb-gathering at that time was a very widespread occupation. There were the

¹ Fynes Moryson's *Itinerary*, first printed in London by John Beale, 1617, limited edition. James MacLehose and Sons, Glasgow, 1907.

² *The Endeavour of John Fernel*, Sir Charles Sherrington. Cambridge University Press, 1946.

³ Robert Turner, a seventeenth-century herbalist cited by C. E. Raven in *English Naturalists from Neckam to Ray*. Cambridge University Press, 1947.

herb-women who brought their goods into the town and village markets—Cheapside market being the centre for those who lived near London. There were grocers and apothecaries, surgeons and physicians, and of these last two the searchers were as likely to be mere *empirics* as to be properly qualified men. Even shepherds were familiar with many common herbs, or desired to be familiar with them. As early as 1506 various herbs were enumerated in the *Kalender of Shepherdes*¹ as being beneficial in the treatment of divers complaints: saffron, borage, fennel, galyngale, garlyke, sauge, wormwood, calamyte, tansey, rewe, sothern wood, and the like. A recipe, *Good for the eyen*, vouched for by the master shepherd begins: 'The reed rose, vervayne, rewe, fenell, salendyne, enfrage, pympernell, oculi christi, to plunge thyne eyen on clere water . . .' and is followed by other, more general instructions to help in strengthening the eyes. All the herbs named would need to be collected, even *oculi christi*, and all of them—and this point is important—would have to be known by name.

Naming plants, which involves identifying them, is not always easy, even to-day, when one can have recourse to, say, Bentham and Hookers' *Flora*, but to these workers in the past it would often be more difficult than is generally realized. Names did not come to the searchers by instinct. If those searchers were honest, names had to be learned with pain and care—and with what pain and care becomes clear only as one follows the records of those many observers and collectors who worked from the third or fourth decade of the sixteenth century to the time when, more than a hundred years later, the Royal Society lifted botany from being the handmaid of medicine and surgery to be a science of its own.

The raising of the status of physicians,² surgeons,³ and apothecaries⁴ during this period naturally changed the attitude of all these three groups of men to the herbs they used in their various callings. Physicians were automatically men of education and hence 'had inherited from the Graeco-Roman

¹ Printed by Richarde Pynson in London, 1506, from the original Paris edition of 1493, via a crude translation made into English in Paris, 1503.

² Royal College of Physicians, founded in London, 1518.

³ Barber-Surgeons incorporated in London, 1540.

⁴ Society of Apothecaries separated from Grocers' Company, 1617.

world, from Aristotle, or rather Nicolaus of Damascus, to whom the *De Plantis* is now ascribed, and from Aristotle's pupil Theophrastus, from Pliny the Elder, and from Dioscorides, the author of the *De Materia Medica*, a considerable list of plants with brief descriptions, occasional and traditionalized pictures, and a large and various lore of qualities and uses . . . To identify a species correctly became a matter of the highest importance . . . But to fit our native flora into the lists derived from antiquity and the south demanded ingenuity, or unscrupulousness, of the highest order. We know, from constant complaints of fraud, that many herbalists were content to substitute available alternatives for plants of traditional importance, even if poisoning was the result.' ¹

'To fit our native plants into the lists derived from antiquity and from the south' was found, as the years rolled on, not always to be possible. But one of the first workers who tried whole-heartedly and whole-mindedly to do this was William Turner. He was born at Morpeth in Northumberland about 1508, and he eventually became a physician and keen herbalist. When he was in his teens, the only English herball was the *Grete Herball*, more a compilation than the work of one author. Though regarded as a classic at the time, Turner considered it to be 'full of unlearned cacographees and falselye naminge of herbes',² and it was not long before he himself set about writing a new herbal, based first of all on work done by himself in the fields of his own countryside.

The great Zurich naturalist, Conrad Gesner, counted Turner as one of his friends. Mathias De l'Obel, the Flemish botanist who eventually spent many years in England, corresponded with Turner, though probably the two never met. For Turner died in 1568, and De l'Obel did not come to this country until the following year. Turner, however, stood high in the Fleming's estimation: 'our very learned Turner,' De l'Obel called him.

Turner travelled widely in search of plants. 'He had done a large amount of field-work, not only in the herb-gardens of

¹ *English Naturalists from Neckam to Ray*, C. E. Raven.

² Cited by C. E. Raven.

Western Europe and the parks of his patrons, but "abrode in the felde", on the Alps, along the Rhine, in Friesland, and on the heaths and beaches of England. Nor was his interest solely in the search for new species. he was fascinated by the structure and growth of what he saw and had a real gift for description.' ¹

De l'Obel,² who came to England, as has been said, just too late to meet Turner, stayed, on and off, for some two years here. Then he lived for about fourteen years on the Continent, after which he came to England again, this time to live here almost continuously from 1585 till his death in 1616. Now De l'Obel's work was famous in all the great University cities in Europe. With him corresponded botanists of repute from every one of these centres of learning. We find, for instance, that James Cargill of Aberdeen and James Nasmyth of Edinburgh were writing letters to De l'Obel in London from their own University towns in Scotland, at just about the very time that Fynes Moryson gives us his fascinating glimpse of the *Empirics* making their way into the border fields of Cumberland. While those latter, however, made no contact with the great in the botanic world, Cargill and Nasmyth sent specimens to De l'Obel, about which they had much to say. James Cargill had been to Europe to further his botanical studies and had attended Gaspard Bauhin's lectures at Basel. And Gaspard Bauhin, with his brother Jean, were among the most illustrious botanists of their day. Cargill had, from his explorations in the country round Aberdeen, sent to De l'Obel a lovely plant like the yellow Norwegian asphodel—no doubt *Narthecium ossifragum*; and in 1603 he sent the first recorded British specimen of *Trientalis europæa*, at least four other plants, and several sea-weeds to Bauhin'.³ As for James Nasmyth, he became 'chiefe Chyrurgeon in his time to King James',⁴ and like many another Scot he made a garden in the land of his adoption. Indeed, in his garden in London, in April, 1605, he actually brought a 'Black Fritillary' to flower.

There is almost no end to the names of the great Continental botanists of this period, and of great names at home there is no

¹ C. E. Raven.

² C. E. Raven.

³ *Lobelia* derives its name from him.

⁴ C. E. Raven.

lack. Thomas Penny was another naturalist-doctor, who in his dual capacity prosecuted his exploring studies into the plant characters of his own home district and the country farther afield. He was born at Gressingham, on the River Lune, about the year 1530. Like Turner, he was acquainted with Gesner, with whom he actually worked for almost a year at Zurich. Penny was about thirty-five years old when he went to Zurich, and he had, it seems, already 'begun to form a *hortus siccus* and to draw and describe plants . . . It is certain from De l'Obel that he had botanised in the north'.¹ He had probably covered some of the very fields of the border that the Empiric surgeons were accustomed to visit. Another of the great European botanists, De l'Ecluse, makes mention of 'the eminent Thomas Penny',² from whom he had obtained a description and a drawing of one of the thornless brambles, the knotberry *Rubus chamæmorus*. 'It consists of stems twelve inches long,' Penny says, 'on which alternately grow three, four or rarely five leaves, rough in texture not unlike those of a marrow or rather a mulberry divided into five points and serrated on long pedicels, and springing out of two wings or processes embracing the stalk. The top of the stem bears a single flower, standing out of blackish purple bracts. The fruit is very like that of a mulberry but a little smaller, at first whitish and bitter, then red and sharply sweet. The root is knotted, sending out a few fibres from each knot . . . It flowers in June and early July: the fruit is ripe in August. It loves snowy and open places and the tops of hills and grows in great plenty among heather on mount Ingleborrow the highest in all England, twelve miles from Lancaster.'³

When we come to John Gerard, we meet a man of a very different type. As Thomas Johnson⁴ made clear when he edited the second edition of Gerard's *Herball* in 1633, Gerard was a plagiarist of the first water. 'Gerard was a rogue: of that there can be no doubt. But like many such he was a pleasant fellow and had a number of good friends.'⁵ And to these good

¹ C. E. Raven.

² Cited by C. E. Raven.

³ Translated by C. E. Raven from the Latin of Charles De l'Ecluse's *Stirpium Pannonicarum Historia*.

⁴ Apothecary and botanist (1604-64).

⁵ C. E. Raven.

friends both he and others owe a debt, for he 'preserved the evidence of some otherwise unknown students which is worth notice. The most interesting of these is Thomas Hesketh, 'a worshipful and learned gentleman of Lancashire, a diligent searcher of simples and a fervent lover of plants.'¹ Hesketh found *Viola lutea*, for instance, on the Lancashire coast at Lytham. He found, too, cloudberry in Yorkshire and on Pendle Hill, in Lancashire. He discovered a double wild crow-foot near Wigan which he introduced into London gardens. He came across, to name but one more, Cargill's *Narthecium ossifragum* 'the Lancashire asphodill',² as far north as the environs of Lancaster.

Then there was Gerard's friend and servant, William Marshall, whom Gerard 'sent into the Mediterranean as chirurgeon to the Hercules of London',³ to attend to the sick in the ship and also to make what observations he could of the plant life he met as he travelled. There were some Welshmen among Gerard's friends. One of them, Master Robert Davyes of Guissaney in Flintshire sent, for inclusion in the *Herball*, the Welsh names of many plants growing in his own countryside.

Even before the apothecaries separated from the grocers they had begun to show themselves very interested in the organized collection of simples. This eventually led to 'an annual Simpling Day becoming a regular institution, a date late in June being usually chosen and two Stewards being appointed to lead the party'.⁴ Mathias De l'Obel gives us some details of one such excursion. He is referring to a specimen of *Phleum pratense*. 'This elegant Grass,' he says, 'was first found by us on the upland meadows between Islington and Highgate, on a public excursion and simpling tour when we accompanied Dr. Richard Forster sometime President of the famous London College of Physicians and Dr. Francis Herring, Fellow of the same College.'⁵ Both men were outstanding in their profession and the fact 'that they encouraged these botanical explorations is a matter of some importance: it means not only that the

¹ Gerard, cited by C. E. Raven.

² Gerard's name for the plant.

³ Gerard's *Herball*.

⁴ C. E. Raven.

⁵ Cited by C. E. Raven.

doctors were no longer ready to leave their drugs to herb-women or untrained apothecaries but that the flora of Britain would at last be scientifically investigated'.¹

One of the most active workers towards the incorporation of the Apothecaries was John Parkinson, whose business was in Ludgate Hill. 'He published in 1629 the first English gardening book ². . . it contains nearly a thousand plants described and illustrated . . . On the strength of this publication he was given, by Charles I, the title of *Botanicus Regius Primarius*.' ³ Some of the plants he describes are pleasant to hear of now, for instance 'the Ladies' Slipper (*Cypripedium calceolus*) which groweth in Lancashire near upon the border of Yorkshire in a wood or place called the Helkes, three miles from Ingleborough, the highest hill in England and not far from Ingleton as I am informed by a courteous Gentlewoman, a great lover of these deliglts, called Mistris Thomasin Tunstall, who dwelleth at Bullbanke near Hornby Castle'.⁴ Mistress Thomasin Tunstall was also able to give Parkinson some other noteworthy information. She found scurvy grass growing on Ingleborough, a surprising fact to those who had formerly believed it always grew near the sea.

A fellow apothecary, Thomas Johnson, of Snow Hill, shared John Parkinson's keen interest in plants and wrote commendatory verses in Latin for Parkinson's gardening book. But Johnson went further in his botanical studies than Parkinson, and became indeed 'the first systematic explorer of England for plants'.⁵ Like so many of our early botanists, he was a north country man, his birthplace being Selby, in Yorkshire. He had done a good deal of exploration in his own county and in Lincolnshire by the time he reached his early twenties. As time went on Johnson began to work on the outskirts of London, and then extended his activities into Kent. One excursion that he took with a number of fellow apothecaries to Hampstead yielded records which 'form an excellent beginning of a local flora and seem to be accurate and trustworthy'.⁶ In 1632, a longer tour was planned and

¹ C. E. Raven.

² C. E. Raven.

³ C. E. Raven.

⁴ *Paradisi in sole Paradisus terrestris*.

⁵ Cited by C. E. Raven.

⁶ C. E. Raven.

Johnson's party went to Margate, then to Sandwich, next to Canterbury, Faversham, and Gravesend, from where they took a boat back to London. Two years later Johnson was staying 'at Bath in medical attendance on a lady of means, Mistress Ann Walter and partly for the exploration of the famous Avon gorge at Bristol'.¹ He, in company with a party of other enthusiasts from London, toured a wide area, including Marlborough, Keynsham, Trowbridge, Salisbury, Southampton, Cowes, and Newport. Returning by way of Ryde and Portsmouth, the party rode through Chichester, Petworth, Godalming, and home to London through Guildford. The plants discovered were listed with those found in Kent, so that 'the catalogue forms a substantial preparation for a flora of southern England. *Phyteuma orbiculare* "betweene Selbury Hill and Beacon Hill in the way to Bathe", *Geranium sanguineum* from St. Vincent's rocks and *Ornithogalum pyrenaicum* "betweene Bath and Bradford, not far from little Ashley" are the best finds of the tour'.²

Johnson's last botanizing journey was made in 1639. The account of this was dedicated to *Thomas Glynn of Glynn-lhivon*.³ As Johnson and his companion, Paul Sone, knew no Welsh they took a Welshman with them—Edward Morgan, who not long after became supervisor of the Physic Garden at Westminster.⁴ The route took the explorers through Aylesbury and Stratford-on-Avon, Billesley, Bromwich, and Wolverhampton, next to Newport, Shackerforth Mill, and Chester. Here they were joined by a Yorkshire botanist, Walter Stonehouse, and here they stayed for a few days with Dr. Samuel Bispham. Then came the plunge into Wales. Riding through Flint and Holywell to Rhuddlan, they would pass fairly close to the sea. At Rhuddlan, on the Clwyd, they stayed a night, after which they went on to Garth-gogo.⁵ Here there was much opportunity to botanize, for the great limestone headland is affected so much by the sea breezes that much of its flora—its heaths, crowberries, rock-roses, bilberries, cotton grass—tends to be dwarfed, and to disguise at times

¹ C. E. Raven² C. E. Raven.³ Viz. Glynllifon.⁴ Visited by John Evelyn there in the June of 1658.⁵ Pen-y-Gogarth, or Great Orme.

its true character in the process. After this they went to Aberconway, and up the Conway valley for two or three miles to Bodskalan,¹ and its hospitable host Robert Wynn. 'Then by the narrow and terrifying track over Penmaenmawr they came to Bangor and Caernarvon and to Thomas Glynn's home, four miles beyond and near Llandwrog, with its wonderful view of the sea and the Isle of Anglesey and Ireland in front and of the British Alps behind.'²

Early in August the party climbed the Wyddfa spur of Snowdon, to them a fearsome undertaking, but they found many plants of interest, including *Viola palustris*, *Thymus serpyllum*, *Sedum roseum*, some campions and saxifrages, a club-moss, and to their surprise sea thrift and sea campion—as surprising as the scurvy grass that Mistress Thomasin Tunstall found growing on Ingleborough.

Names there are yet in plenty one might add to this already considerable list of explorers, but enough have been given to typify the work done over roughly a century. As we look back and see scientific botany gradually emerging from more or less ignorant herb-gathering we cannot help but be impressed by the long array of names and the detailed lists and records which the orthodox exploring botanists were able to provide.

Two entries in Evelyn's diary come to mind at this point: one for 21st October, 1670, which reads 'our English itinerant³ presented an account of his autumnal peregrination about England, for which we hired him, bringing dried fowls, fish, plants, animals, etc.'. The other is for 7th February, 1682, and tells how Evelyn was suffering from violent and recurrent fits of ague. As a remedy he drank '*carduus* posset then going to bed and sweating' so that not only did he miss 'that expected fit but actually had no more'.⁴

Was this an orthodox remedy of the day, or did our member of the Royal Society, in spite of the hiring of an English

¹ Viz. Bodysgallen.

² C. E. Raven.

³ Thomas Willisel. He toured Lancashire, Yorkshire, Cumberland, Westmorland, etc.; also the environs of London, Worcestershire, Devon, Cornwall, Kent.

⁴ *The Diary of John Evelyn*, Globe Edition. Macmillan, 1908. Austin Dobson gives this note: *Carduus Benedictus*, or Blessed Thistle, used as a posset-drink for fevers (Miller's *Herbal*, 1722).

itinerant, still go back to some old wife's or empiric remedy that the physicians did not countenance? For to complete the treatment it is only fair to add that 'recourse was had to bathing Evelyn's legs in milk up to the knees, made as hot as he could endure it, and sitting so in it in a deep churn or vessel covered with blankets', which hardly sounds an orthodox remedy. But thistles seem to have fascinated more than one exploring botanist; 'a kinde of Thistel with white prickle leaves, called in English Saint Marie Thistel (*Carduus Marianus*),'¹ for instance, or the wild artichoke or Cowthistel² (*Carduus crispus*), or again the Friar's Crown³ (*Carduus eriophorus*). They would fascinate, we may be sure, the *Scottish Empericke Surgeons* as they came over the hill country to the plains. Who exactly were those *Empericke Surgeons*? Where did they live? And on what principle did they select the herbs they so wonderfully extolled?

¹ From T. Cooper's *Dictionarie of Plantes*, 1563

² From T. Cooper's *Dictionarie of Plantes*, 1563

³ In John Parkinson's garden.

WILD LIFE ON A SHETLAND ISLAND

RICHARD PERRY

DURING the spring and summer of 1946 I lived for six months on a little island off the east coast of Shetland studying the behaviour of the sea-fowl—more especially the gannets—that nested in colonies on the island's 500-foot sandstone cliffs, and also of those pirates and killers, the skuas, that nested on the moors in the interior of the island. But though I devoted the major part of my time to these birds I was not oblivious to other aspects of nature in the wicks and voes around the island. There were no reptiles on the island and the only mammals, other than sheep, cattle, and ponies, were rabbits and cats, both of which, though now living in the wild state, had originally been turned down from domestic stock. The cats lived in the rabbit-warrens, though an occasional pussy might be found on the biggest cliff-tops, and never came within the precincts of the house when men were about. Despite rearing litters of as many as seven kittens, they did not appear to thrive on a diet of rabbits and, no doubt, the eggs and young of the sea-birds, and I doubt whether the number of adults exceeded ten; nor had there been any reversion to tabby colouring, the colours of all adults and young being black and white, tortoiseshell, and ginger.

The island was separated from another island by a sound no more than a couple of hundred yards wide, but open at either end to the North Sea. As there were no beaches or sheltered inlets along the entire length of the rocky shore, on either side of the sound, there was no getting in or out of my island—intermittently inhabited only by a shepherd during the summer months—on stormy days. There were, thus, periods when I was alone with the sea-birds for two or three days at a stretch. The only house on the island stood on a narrow green ness immediately above the sound and beneath

the towering mass of a great hill rising 450 feet almost sheer from the rocky brow-edge of the opposite shore.

For two months there was no true darkness through the night. I went to bed with the joyful clamorous yelping of the little kittiwake gulls, still returning through the sound to their nesting cliffs from the freshwater lochan on the opposite shore where they bathed, and awoke to the sleepy cooing of eider ducks immediately under my window. All through the night the gulls yodelled intermittently and oystercatchers piped, while the racing waters of the sound rushed and thropped unceasingly.

The sound served as a short-cut between the two seas north and south of the island not only for birds, but for porpoises, who cart-wheeled through it, one always leading the other by a short head, and for the Atlantic grey seals, who also fished its waters, crunching up big flatties, bolting them with a backward chuck of their heads, or monstrous angler-fishes, whose grisly toothed gapes were wider than their captors' heads; while the soft-winged fulmars, who nested in thousands all round the island's cliffs, swept low above the water, dipping in their webbed feet and snipping up the fragments of fish chopped off by the seals. Though totally defenceless, except for the musk-scented oil which it would vomit forth like a flame-thrower when approached on its nest, and normally a feeder on plankton, the fulmar was yet lord of the seas around the island and would drive away by sheer force of personality the gigantic skuas or great black-backed gulls from the carcasses of kittiwakes or guillemots they had killed and were tearing to pieces on the sea below the cliffs.

Droves of periscopic-necked shags and cormorants also fished in the dark purple shadows of the reefs stretching out into the sound, while solitary little black guillemots—known to the Shetlander as tysties—dived at long intervals to bring up small crabs, which they dismembered by shaking vigorously, diving to recapture them after each de-legging. From time to time twenty or thirty dazzling white gannets would converge on the approaches to the sound, when they perceived one of their fellows to hover and plunge into the crystal waters and down into the chalky green and milky blue

deeps above the white sand-beaches; but, for the most part, they fished for herrings twenty or thirty miles offshore.

The most exciting place, however, was the great cliffs at the seaward end of the island, which rose in a mile-long sweep from the shores of the sound to the narrow crest of a 600-foot precipice, where the island had been sliced off as cleanly as if by a knife. There, and from the lower cliffs on either side, one could survey that tumultuous, kaleidoscopic spectacle that has few parallels in the world of Nature—the breeding colonies of vast numbers of sea-fowl. The scene is one of great animation and ceaseless tumult. To my eyrie on a projecting promontory at one end of the cliffs rises, crescendoing and diminishing, but never totally subsiding, a raucous medley of diverse harsh and musical cries from tens of thousands of individuals of several different species of sea-birds, blended into one harmonious din, one pattern of sound, from which only intermittently can one detach the separate components—the squeaky braying *wick-gewer, wick-gewer* of the snowy-breasted kittiwakes; the prolonged and humorous *woo-orr-oo-gg* and other familiar protests of the thousands of guillemots—those British ‘penguins’—huddled up in their thousands in massed townships or along ledges hundreds of feet long; the intermittent cawing of the solitary-nesting fulmars; and, dominant, the harsh grating rise and fall of the gannets’ interminable *gurrah, gurrah, gurrah*, from those thousands of great white ‘boobies’ ranked up on big nest-drums all along the cliff-ledges, and from others continually coming in from sea to alight on the cliffs; while ever in the background is the hollow booming of the sea surging to and fro in the high-arched caverns and geos in the wall of cliff, an intermittent moaning which I at first attributed to the grey seals.

In the chasm of the wick, which forms a great rectangular bight in the long frontage of the cliffs, weave hundreds of gannets, fulmars, and kittiwakes, while the dark oily-blue waters of the wick are spangled with white hieroglyphics, traced by chains of black and white guillemots, and continually erupt in glaucous-green fountains thrown up by the shallow dives of gannets plunging in obliquely, as a preliminary to bathing. On the reefs at the base of the cliffs pied

packs of eider drakes sunbathe on beds of orange, brown, and green sea-weed, while other fleets rock gently on the sea. On the grassy tops of holms or the ledges of the cliff-face beneath are lined up scores of little red-footed and white-breasted puffins—sea-parrots with their huge multi-coloured beaks—while others scuttle in and out of their burrows after moments of tense deliberation, and the wick is full of the circling black arcs of these sharp-winged sea-swifts.

From time to time a bonxie—the great skua—sails out over the wick, turns, and flaps along the wall of cliff. At his passing snowy clouds of kittiwakes shoal off the cliffs, and perhaps the killer drops on one, knocking it down to the water, when it begins to peck at its head. Its mate joins it, and the two rip up the carcass. White feathers float away on the tide and a red dye spreads outwards, while a couple of greater black-back gulls swim alongside, awaiting their turn, only to be foiled by an insignificant fulmar which, 'busking' its wings, shoots at the bonxies and drives them off.

For weeks the great black-backs feasted on a bloated mass of whale's intestines washed up on the rocks at the edge of the sound. All through the spring and summer some three hundred Norwegian whalers—wooden-built copper-bottomed boats with diesel engines and carrying a crew of five or six—were bomb-harpooning whales off Shetland and baiting sharks on flexible steel lines. The whale they hunted was the lesser rorqual, the smallest of the Finner whales. Sometimes, when I was lying on the cliff-tops watching the gannets, one of these great beasts would breach quite close in to the cliffs affording a brief glimpse of white belly, shark-like underjaw and enormous tail-flukes, as it launched itself perpendicularly out of the sea, ascribed an arc in mid-air, and crashed back flatly with thunderous impact. When dark 'boiling' fields of mackerel made silver ripples on a calm sea with their incessant jumping a thirty-foot blackish-grey herring-hog—as the rorqual was known in Shetland—would turn leisurely cart-wheels through their seething mass, in contrast to the quick wheels of the tiny porpoises which, together with the small round-headed common seals, would also be among the mackerel, while the gannets gobbled them up sitting on the

sea or with oblique almost flat dives from a height of only a few feet. Surfacing two or three times every minute, with a white foam along his jaws, one might hear the whale's 'blow' faintly, and a smooth oily patch would appear on the sea when he sounded for a period of several minutes.

In July basking-sharks, or sail-fish—or, if you are a Shetlander, brigdies—made their appearance in island waters, and there were days when as many as three would cruise around an island wick at one time: first two, perhaps, cruising together, and then all three apart but on the same periphery. On red-letter occasions a fifteen-foot brigdie would propel his smooth greyish-black bulk in leisurely circles round and round one of the small voes for an hour or more at a time, often breaking the surface of the water with his long and narrow whitish-tipped muzzle. So close might he pass beneath the low brow-edge of the voe that I could look down into his wide-open ivory-green gape and see the five black weals of his gill-rakers striping his drab-brown hide, as his gleaming glaucous-white shape cruised through the clear green waters over patches of white sand.

At a greater distance he presented an extraordinary spectacle, with his blackish-grey crinkly-edged sail-fin protruding as much as two feet out of the water, for this pliable waving buckler of hide did not jut out vertically from the water, but keeled over in a supple bend. It bore every appearance of not belonging to the same creature as the single-fluked tail-fin so distant from it, which eddied and oscillated from side to side without any apparent relation in either its movement or direction to those of the sail, sometimes bending round almost to meet it in a circle!

After twenty minutes of this circular cruising close round beach and cliffs the brigdie might cut a big circle outside the voe, with only the tip of its sail showing above water for the most part: but would soon come in again, before finally making another circle right round the voe and then out to sea.

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

LUCY WALTER. WIFE OR MISTRESS. LORD GEORGE SCOTT, O.B.E. Harrap. 12s. 6d.

ANY attempt to reverse the established judgment of centuries is justified if the result is either interesting or successful. Lord George Scott, who had set out to prove that his ancestress, Lucy Walter, mother of the Duke of Monmouth, was not the mistress but the wife of Charles II, cannot be said to have fulfilled either of these conditions. The book (which appeared after his death), is too long-winded, repetitive, and confusing to hold the attention of the common reader; and the evidence, consisting admittedly of 'a number of small scraps of information which are difficult to marshal', is so conflicting that the historian is unlikely to be convinced. The author's contention that she has been maligned as a beautiful strumpet of mean origin is apparently correct, for according to the pedigree which he has established for her, she goes back through the Howard family to royal descent; nor does it appear likely that she was as alleged a prostitute, although that is by no means the same thing as being legally married to the king. Lord George Scott insists that 'evidence injurious to Monmouth and his mother is from unreliable, biased, and malicious sources,' and therefore has to refute contemporary writers such as Clarendon and Evelyn, and even to declare Lord Acton to have been 'beguiled'. He quotes accounts of the destruction of the marriage certificate by the Duke of Buccleuch, a fact which at least is credible and more weighty than most of his other evidence.

There is, for instance, a reference in the newspaper *Mercurius Politicus* in 1656, when, during a brief visit to London, Lucy Walter was temporarily imprisoned in the Tower, possibly as a spy. 'She passeth under the character of Charles Stuart's Wife or Mistress.' But the same paper also refers to her as 'his Lady of Pleasure'. Again, the author asserts that Miss Strickland's *Life of Catherine of Braganza* (Charles's wife) is suggestive, but on verification nothing is found more conclusive than this bit of hearsay: 'Charles created this youth

Duke of Monmouth, and gave him precedence over every duke in the realm except his royal brother, and treated him with such extraordinary honours, that it was generally reported that he had been married to his mother, and meant to declare him his successor.' The fact that the lad was made much of, and was brought to England by the king's mother after Lucy's death in France, actually proves nothing save that he must have been a charming boy. The most fantastic of all the arguments put forward by the author is his comment on a suggestion quoted from Burnet that the king should marry Cromwell's daughter, to which Oliver replied, 'he is so damnably debauched, he would undo us all,' and changed the subject. Says Lord George Scott: 'This is quoted because Cromwell may have known that Charles had a wife in Lucy'...

The Duke of Monmouth may or may not have been the legitimate heir of Charles II. This book does not resolve any doubt which the reader may have had on the matter, and leaves him with the added conviction that he could not conceivably care less.

D. L. HOBMAN

BYRON. C. E. VULLIAMY. Michael Joseph. 15s.

To Byron, a person of somewhat rare experiences, befell the most unusual of all, that of the perfect liaison. It was with Lady Oxford. She was forty-six, he twenty-four. The happiness of the poet in this love, is most deeply revealing. Mr. Vulliamy who is obviously attached to Byron, writes almost idyllically of the episode, and with reason, for in discussing its success he attains to true comprehension of Byron and his unanswered nature. None but Mr. Peter Quennel has gone so near. One feels it is but a step further to the complete solution. But a psychological step. The judgment of Byron should not rightly rest with the moralists, but with those physicians of the mind who practise the tenderest and most merciful of sciences. One feels that Mr. Vulliamy is aware of this. One wonders whether he refrained, or whether he did not see the final step. He states his belief that the understanding of Byron

is dependent upon the careful reading of his poetry, letters, and journals, and upon the testimony of those who knew him. This view is so important that it should be mentally underlined by every reader. Only one more study is vital, and this for some reason Mr. Vulliamy appears to have slurred over—that of Mrs. Byron. His somewhat pert contempt for her and (it seems) most women has caused him to dismiss her with such facile description as ‘appalling’, and to flaw a book of very considerable worth in so doing. On the other hand he has clarified the possible causes of Byron’s death as no other biographer; and he has scrupulously recorded such evidence as exists both for and against Byron’s sexual character. His honesty and restraint offsets a style which is at times singularly unattractive, surly, and self-conscious, bitter and smirking. In spite of repeated allusions to bad taste, he is very frequently guilty of an uneducated tone himself. And he is not always fair. Yet one must admit that one understands far better why for 132 years the jurors of posterity have never succeeded in collecting a verdict on the Byron marriage and the Augusta Leigh conundrum, after reading this book. Byron lied—everybody lied; and everybody was determined. He was loudly surrounded, and is now as ever, cut off, as we are, from the truth concerning himself.

Mr. Vulliamy is not fair to Mrs. Byron, or to Lady Byron, and when he is unfair he is unpleasant. Yet he is over-indulgent towards Claire Claremont over whom he might have been vituperative with reason. There are few people I should imagine who could *like* Lady Byron. But she suffered. The crime her husband committed against marriage may not have been incest but it certainly was cruelty. Her defencelessness, during that year, was utter, and she was piteous. We cannot understand her poses, we must be revolted by her confidences, and the disgusting mental bullying of silly Augusta Leigh; we must be astounded, unsympathetic, and even outraged by the mean priggishness Lady Byron displayed—but we *can* understand her loving Byron. Yet Mr. Vulliamy can say—and I give it as a specimen of his style as well as of the shallowness which leers to the surface in a deep moment. ‘Did she—the ingenuous question is unavoidable—did she love him?’

I should think it is unavoidable! But why is it ingenuous? And why the self-consciousness in asking it? It is surely an important—a most important and adult question, concerned with the fundamental cause of the marriage which broke Byron's life and made his poetry. There can be no reason for being arch at this point. Again, Mr. Vulliamy deliberately conveys the impression that Lady Byron was indifferent to her husband's death. But Fletcher, the valet, testified that she wrung her hands and wept and implored him to remember the dying words which he had not heard and there is no reason to suppose him a greater liar than the rest of them. But Mr. Vulliamy is fond of disparaging females, and it therefore follows that in writing of women he will be at his most spiteful. Reading the best parts of his book one wonders why he must drag in remarks like, it takes a woman to reach the depths of hypocrisy, etc. This is about as true as Byron's own 'you know I despise the sex too much to squabble with them'. One thinks here of his dislike of Marianne Leigh-Hunt's sharp tongue with positive delight—another woman to whom the author has done less than justice although it is her scissor-cut of Byron which makes so good a jacket for the book. It is not bad taste to be a Londoner and to have a lot of children.

Apart from Mr. Vulliamy's own type of cant, however, his work is very valuable and very sensitive to the too little known beauties of Byron's poetry. I think he underrates *Manfred* and over-stresses the lively side of 'Donny Johnny'. And he finds chasms in the regular features of the romantic narrative poems which I cannot, and more in Beppo than I can appreciate.

A person I once knew used to describe Byron as an irregular verb. And he said that writing Byron's biography was like shuffling cards—all the facts were stacked together, then shuffled and of course the results were bound to be different every time. I think this is apt: and it explains why a new book on him is always exciting. For almost no man is as interesting. One cannot enjoy any work on him, however, without the grieved and grateful thought that it is the saddest pity he had to suffer so much in creating the profound and bewitching study which is himself.

MARGIAD EVANS

SHAKESPEARE SURVEY (1). Edited by ALLARDYCE NICOLL. Cambridge University Press. 12s. 6d.

SPONSORED by the University of Birmingham, the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, and the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, this is the first volume of what is to be an annual survey of Shakespearian study and production. Let it at once be said that this first volume, which is entirely excellent, augurs well for the future of the series. No one in the least seriously interested in Shakespeare can ignore it.

The editor, Professor Allardyce Nicoll, leads off with a review of studies in the Elizabethan stage since 1900. Among eleven other essays may be noted with particular approval I. A. Shapiro's discussion of the Bankside theatres and Gerald Eades Bentley on 'Shakespeare and the Blackfriars Theatre.' Levi Fox, director of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, writes knowledgeably on 'The Heritage of Shakespeare's Birthplace'. Charles Landstone, associate drama director of the Arts Council of Great Britain, compares four *Lears*—Olivier's, Philip Morant's (West Riding Repertory, Huddersfield), William Devlin's (Bristol), and Abraham Sofaer's (Liverpool). George Rylands and Una Ellis-Fermor 'cover' London productions of 1947, and H. S. Bennett and George Rylands 'cover' those of Stratford for the same year. There are, in addition, reviews of critical and textual studies. Illustrations include views of Elizabethan London, of the second Globe theatre, of Shakespeare's birthplace before and after restoration, and scenes from London, Stratford, West Riding, and Dublin productions. It will be noticed that emphasis is on 'Shakespeare and the Stage'. The next volume is to deal mainly with 'The Problem Plays and Romances, and the quality of this first is such that the second will be eagerly awaited.

H. K. FISHER

SONGS OF THE RESTORATION THEATRE. Edited by PHILIP JOHN STEAD. Methuen. 8s. 6d.

A SOMEWHAT flowery introduction leads on to a collection of songs from Restoration plays, to which a few pert notes on the authors are added; thus, 'Dryden is one of the great English poets: and one of the greatest English critics,' 'His'

(Congreve's) 'life was leisured, cultured, urbane and largely devoted to pleasure,' 'Captain Farquhar wrote a play which is still acted—*The Beaux' Stratagem*.' If the reader is presumed to be ignorant or the book is aimed at those with no knowledge of the period, it would have been better to have given more information on the pieces themselves, and on their original casts.

Most of the better-known songs are here, and quite a number of the less familiar. Indeed, some songs are reprinted for the first time. But on the whole the editor seems to have missed his opportunities. Mrs. Behn is represented with eight songs, so perhaps there was no need to include her 'Phyllis whose heart was unconfin'd' from *The Rover*; but room should have been found for Otway's 'Welcom Mortal to this place' from *The Atheist* and if there be reason for omitting 'Hear, you Midnight Phantoms' from *The Fair Penitent*, Vanbrugh should surely have been given his song from *The Relapse*; though it did come as late as 1708, he is allowed in with one from *The Provok'd Wife*, two years later. I should have liked, too, to have come upon 'Your Eyes, Belinda, you disarm' from Burnaby's *The Ladies' Visiting Day* (1701) or 'Cloe is divinely fair' from the same piece. Joseph Harris is drawn on from *The City Bride*, but there is a pleasing song in his *Love's a Lottery*, in which also the masque with which it concludes is not without interest. One may not miss 'If moving softness can subdue' from Baker's *Tunbridge Walks*, and perhaps Mrs. Centlivre is not strictly Restoration, if the seeming paradox of that phrase may be forgiven; otherwise, there should have been included the song 'designed to be sung by Mr. Dogget' in her play *The Stolen Heiress*. In short, this would have been a more satisfactory book had its editor made more clear the principles on which he worked and the public for whom it is intended. As it is, it is too haphazard and not over-knowledgeable.

TREVOR JAMES

COVENT GARDEN. DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR. Max Parrish. Illustrated. 6s.

WELL-INFORMED and excellently illustrated, this is a history primarily from the musical standpoint of the three theatres

which have stood on the Covent Garden site. As such, it emphasizes particularly the last hundred years, during which Covent became the centre for generations of the world's greatest singers. At the same time, neither earlier nor more recent developments are neglected, so that the book is a concise and worth-while addition to our slowly-growing histories of playhouses.

H. K. FISHER

THE RAILWAYS OF BRITAIN. O. S. Nock. Batsford. Illustrated. 15s.

THIS is a good book. Railway belles-lettres, as opposed to railway histories, are apt to be facetious in the same horrible manner as our mid-twentieth-century handbooks of Christianity, but Mr. Nock has controlled his comedy to admiration. He writes for the layman rather than for the connoisseur, because the connoisseur is not primarily interested in the beauty of the scenery through which a line passes. Your railway-minded man will travel from London to Exford via Bletchley, and not miss the Thames Valley.

The pictures are excellent except for the coloured plates, which are not the sort of thing we expect from Messrs. Batsford. This is a pity, because the pre-amalgamation liveries were a very distinctive feature of the trains of old.

A few minor criticisms. I think Mr. Nock wrote a little too much about the part of the railways in the war-effort for the charm of a railway has nothing in common with the charm of blood and sweat and tears. Wordsworth never thought of a tree as a provider of bows and arrows.

Mr. Nock gives no hint of the present decadence. The fare in the refreshment-room at Swindon, of all places, will probably raise Brunel from his grave one of these fine days. And the modern portress, though she looks lovely, has not even a glimmering of the tradition of service. The old men are wonderful, always courteous, never obsequious. Still, this remains a good book.

TERENCE GREENIDGE

BAMBOO, LOTUS AND PALM. E. D. EDWARDS. Hodge.
10s. 6d.

A year's reading of books on the Far East, on South East Asia and the Pacific gave Mr. Edwards the material for an anthology which includes descriptive extracts about the changing scenes, word-sketches of the peoples, jottings on customs, philosophies and festivals, proverbs and stories.

There are three pleasures in such an anthology, and the first is to note the exotic difference; for the seas round Penang *are* like liquid fire, melted sulphur or phosphorus, and in Manchuria one may really see a frozen mist, while the Japanese have constructed the Ways that go Nowhere, the Steps that lead to Nothing, the avenues lined by symbolic monsters which end in a small void. And the second pleasure is to discover how much like other humans the strange people are; for surely there is an odd ring of familiarity in the Chinese proverb that 'Even a tiger may nod', and to read that 'To let rice fall on one's clothes when eating is to risk being turned into a cow' is simply to be confirmed in one's belief, while the Fijian proverb 'If you have a great canoe, Great will be your labour too' would surely be at home in an English cracker. Then the third pleasure is to acquire useful information. This anthology, for instance, introduces its readers to three Japanese ways of speeding the parting guest, including cauterising the visitor's footgear with moxa.

So it may be sufficient to record that all three pleasures are to be found in this book, which is illustrated by line-drawings copied from old Chinese and Japanese art manuals and artists' note-books.

OSWELL BLAKESTON

SO MANY HUNGERS! BHABANI BHATTACHARYA. Gollancz.
7s. 6d.

SOME of us still remember the Bengal famine of 1943—that terrible disaster brought about by human incompetence and greed—and the violent uprooting of the peasantry of Bengal and their slow, hopeless trek to the great city of Calcutta in search of food. Now Mr. Bhattacharya has attempted to tell

the horrors of those months from the points of view of a highly westernized wealthy Bengali nationalist and a peasant family. He spares us none of the horrific details. The vultures and the jackals suddenly fearless in the presence of the devitalized human, the sex-starved soldier who would not be denied, the procuress on the prowl for rustic flesh—they are all there, minutely and ruthlessly documented.

So Many Hungers! is a poorly contrived novel. It is largely a chronicle with evidence here and there of efforts to make it into a novel. The part where it acquires shape and power is towards the end, where the actual history of the exodus to Calcutta provides Mr. Bhattacharya with the requisite sequence. The Cambridge-educated Bengali, one of the central characters, is a crude abstraction given to political musings that read like extracts from a party manifesto. The peasant family is altogether on the side of the angels: they are incapable of hurting a fly. The peasant girl Kajoli is the only one who has some semblance of life in her. Angels and abstractions are not amenable to tragedy. So Mr. Bhattacharya's book revolts and shocks, but rarely moves.

He is understandably bitter. But his bitterness obtrudes too often into the novel. The author's comment on the human condition portrayed in the novel should never be spotted, except as a radiance that rises from it, which the author never states in so many words anywhere in the book, but the reader apprehends as he gets to the end of it. Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*, where the theme is similar, illustrates the subtle craft by which bleak politics and economics are reduced to human experience.

So Many Hungers! is a first novel which is not lacking in signs of promise.

S. MENON MARATH

THE PREVALENCE OF WITCHES. AUBREY MENEN.

Chatto and Windus. 9s. 6d.

MR. MENEN's first novel is a gay fantasy about the Federated States of Limbo, a backward tract in India inhabited by aboriginals. A village headman of Limbo is in prison awaiting

trial for the murder of a witch. Now the Limbodians believe that witches are responsible for all evil happenings, and therefore it is only logical to get rid of them. To the Political Agent, his friend Bay, and the Education Officer (all Englishmen), who are in charge of the administration of Limbo, this belief appears eminently reasonable, and so they search for ways and means to persuade the rationalist Indian judge to set the prisoner free.

Mr. Menen is not particularly concerned with the conduct of the story. What interests him are the deliciously ironic, hilarious discussions on religion, ethics, art, etc., that he can put into the mouths of his intensely garrulous characters. And there is plenty of witty, erudite, often inconsequent, uniformly entertaining discussions on the prevalence of witches in history, civilization, justice, and so on. Unfortunately, Mr. Menen does not quite keep up the fun; in the latter half of the book the disquisitions become rather serious and wearisome.

Apart from the intellectual diversions and the parade of out of the way tit-bits gleaned from a varied reading, there emerges from this novel a sensitive and sympathetically observed picture of the so-called backward hill tribes of India: an independent people, frank, gay, possessed of a shrewd intelligence, comporting themselves with a simple dignity in their relationship with their rulers.

Mr. Menen has written an urbane, impressive piece of work. He exhibits none of the awkwardness of a beginner, but handles his subject with an engaging assurance of style and purpose.

S. MENON MARATH

THE GROWTH OF TWELVE MASTERPIECES. CHARLES JOHNSON, M.A. Phoenix. 25s.

THE illustrations to this book are a delight in themselves, and they have the added virtue of leading one irresistibly to the text. This is because they serve a purpose, apparent in its main outlines in the title, which is a more than usually cogent one. Perhaps scholarship alone is inadequate to penetrate the

mysteries of artistic creation, but what light it has to throw the National Gallery's Official Lecturer most convincingly succeeds in throwing.

Mr. Johnson, in his introduction, argues that painters 'of genuine genius' always regard their earlier versions and sketches as 'partly obscured expressions of their initial intention'. Each change made is not to be thought of as a correction or afterthought, 'but as a further clarification or uncovering of the vision that first inspired them.' Possibly this contains the seeds of a definition of genius, in its implication that artists of genius alone are able to regard their early versions in this light. One seems free to infer that painters of lesser parts must build from an imperfect initial vision, through some empirical process, to an unforeseen end. That is a simplification which I should hesitate to accept: as, too, the implicit proposition that such means would necessarily prejudice the ends. But if all this is highly speculative, it is certain that it does nothing to prejudice the success of Mr. Johnson's book. For whether the workings of genius are in the nature of inspired leaps in the dark, or whether they are deliberately controlled 'uncoverings' (both, in my view, possible), the author of this volume throws entirely fascinating sidelights on the growth of the twelve selected masterpieces. And if one may wish to advance that developments *may* be purely developments, enrichments—as in music—of the original theme, he has every reason to aver that a study of such variations can 'go further than the most careful study of the masterpiece in isolation towards bringing the personality of the artist to light'.

The twelve subjects have been chosen, to some extent, according to the availability of relevant material, but the result is admirably varied. Ugo da Siena heads a chronological list that ends with Cézanne. Fifty-five monochrome and six full-colour plates illustrate a text which, in addition to its skilful marshalling of facts, shows at times a sensitivity of æsthetic response which one might expect from a practising creative artist. Altogether, it is a book you will certainly desire to possess.

MAX CHAPMAN

THE AUSTRALIAN SCENE

TWENTY GREAT AUSTRALIAN STORIES. Edited by J. L. WATEN and V. G. O'CONNOR. Dolphin Pubs., Melbourne.

COAST TO COAST, AUSTRALIAN STORIES (1945). Edited by DOUGLAS STEWART. Angus and Robertson, Sydney.)

AUSTRALIAN POETRY (1944). Edited by R. G. HOWARTH and (1945) edited by KENNETH SLESSOR. A. and R.

IN many ways Australian literature has been expanding rapidly since 1940. The foundations for this advance were laid during the Thirties; but it took the war (which at last brought industrialization to Australia) to provide the enlarged opportunity. On the one hand it gave something of the necessary material basis: e.g., Australia, which had previously imported almost all its paper, found its supplies cut off and started large paper-mills in Tasmania. And on the other hand, the people, thrown back to a considerable extent on their own resources and facing up to a life-and-death struggle with the Japs who threatened invasion, gained a new and intensified sense of nationhood.

There was advance all along the line: in music and drama as well as literature; but here the latter alone concerns us. The figures of book-production show clearly enough the big burst. Before 1939 a couple of hundred books a year were turned out; in 1940 they came near to six hundred; by 1945 over a thousand was the total; and the figures for 1946-47 probably exceed that. Too large a percentage of these books were reprints of non-Australian books to please the local authors, but beyond a doubt those authors were getting a new chance.

As part of the big break a number of new periodicals came out, and old ones got a new lease of life. For the first time Australia had a good set of varied literary magazines vying with one another to define and express the national culture. The movements ranged from that of the Jindyworobaks, founded by Rex Ingamells, which argued for an Australian approach at all costs, to attempts by other groups to relate



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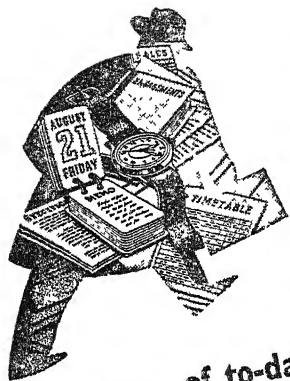
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Australian poetry to world-developments. But with the post-war situation a heavy setback occurred; and Britain's ban on the import of Australian books (as part of the bargain with the U.S.A.) has played a sufficient part in the setback to have caused a very strong resentment in the literary world of Australia. The difference between failure and success often lay in the small extra gain given by the export market in Britain. *Angry Penguins* and *Australian New Writing* died, as did the monthlies, *Progress* and *Tomorrow*, while *Poetry* and *Meanjin* have been almost knocked out.

Not that all the setbacks can be placed at Britain's door. Internally, as part of the sharpening political struggle, a quite fierce effort is being made to attack freedom of expression. The Victorian Parliament has savagely extended the Obscene Publications Act. Georgian House, a reputable Melbourne firm which had done a lot to help the cultural advance during the war, was given the crushing fine of £500 for publishing Robert Close's *Love the Sailor*, a work which all responsible critical opinion has considered to be a serious bit of writing; and worse, the author has been fined £100 and sentenced to three months in jail. At the moment (May) he is out on bail awaiting the hearing of his appeal. In N.S.W., Angus and Robertson, veteran publishers of the highest standing in Australia, have been fined for 'offensive' passages in Lawson Glassop's *We Were the Rats*. The informer who brought about the prosecution of the latter work remarked that she hoped for a new war to wipe out men who 'could talk in such a way about the body of a woman'. *Angry Penguins*, before its decease, was fined for 'obscene passages'. Decidedly Australian authors have got a fight on their own door-mats.

The books under review give some idea of the positive forces at work. *Twenty Stories* shows adequately the pioneer-tradition on which the contemporary writer must in some sort build. In it appears a sharp cleavage between 'literature' and the folktale—i.e. we see the writers floundering in uneasy and journalistic mazes as soon as they try to write as literary gents, and then speaking with magnificent directness and warmth as soon as they forget literature and start off matily yarning. That is why Henry Lawson comes out as the one



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important artist. Not that he ever stands quite secure in his method ; journalistic anæmia threatens as soon as the need to 'write' gets him down, but at his best he drifts clean away into the bar-room or round the campfire, and then his work is founded firmly on true Australian idiom. Only Barbara Baynton, in her handful of stories, showed an intellectually mature method of critical realism.

Many of these early writers, with all their diffuse uncertainties, are of great importance to Australians. Men like Joseph Furphy ('Tom Collins') in *This is Life* expressed with a rambling comprehension a phase of Australian life that is gone for ever, and two of his stories are here printed for the first time. But the style of such writers is unformed, though veined with moments of finely realizing vision in which the idiom rings true. Lawson brought this phase to its head, though many of the best short story writers to-day (e.g. in *Coast to Coast*) still carry on much of his method.

Things, however, couldn't stay there; and yet the transition to a method of greater variety, capable of sustaining the national idiom throughout, has never been fully effected. This is not to say that no novels of considerable staying-power have been written. Henry Handel Richardson's *Fortunes of Richard Mahony* is in its way a masterpiece; but its form derives from European sources and does not help towards a generally-applicable mode of approach. Novelists like Katharine Prichard and Vance Palmer have set out important aspects of national life in sturdy style; and recently their work has been stabilized by such novels as Eleanor Dark's *The Timeless Land*, X. Herbert's *Capricorn*, or Barbara Eldershaw's *Tomorrow and Tomorrow*, while writers like Cecil Mann and Christina Stead have expressed, at times brilliantly, the urban scene.

Yet something is lacking. The full Australian idiom. There is still an unresolved tension between narrative method and material, between conversational flow and the structure of sentence in non-conversational statement. The present development has, I think, brought things much nearer a solution; but still something is lacking. Something; someone who can take the final step, break the bonds of classical



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structure (too often etiolated down to journalistic triteness and meaningless echoes of old symmetries), and write at last in an Australian idiom capable of dealing with life at all levels.

The stories in *Coast to Coast* reveal the lack. They are at their best when they rely on the Lawson synthesis. Throughout, the material is vivid, quick with new colorations; but there is still a creaking joint, an amateurish inability to move at ease in the direct communication of character and event; a strain. It isn't yet quite the Australian language.

Hard to explain, exactly what isn't there. There is no question of any need to extend naturalistic method. On the contrary. No question of simply chucking out all classical structures and depending entirely on conversational movement. That way works only at the folk-level of Lawson, and belongs to the past phase. What is needed is a re-creation of the folk-idiom on a higher level, on an *art-level* in the full sense of the term.

Well, what have the poets to say? In them we expect to find the vanguard of word-regeneration. We look and we find them exciting and yet only very partially facing up to the major task. Poetry has always been one of the main Australian industries; and up to 1900 we meet two trends, the second-rate imitation of English verse and the development of the folk-ballad. Lawson became the first national poet by combining the two trends, with dominance allotted to the folk-element. But almost at once two poets produced work which, though in European idiom, had strong originality and Australian orientations. C. Brennan somehow transplanted the French Symbolists, and Hugh McCrae validly carried Elizabethan lyricism into the Australian sunlight. Following them came a confused moment, when Kenneth Slessor and myself tried to found a school, a dogma, out of their achievement.

An inevitable phase of reaction, no doubt, against the narrowness of the nationalists in literature at that time; but one which, it seems to me in retrospect, has had disastrous results. It drove a line of cleavage between popular and literary elements, and perpetuated the indecisions and compromises I have lamented above. The result has been that in the Thirties the younger poets had to make an almost

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

entirely fresh start; and the problem of a national idiom, proceeding from the Lawson level but widening its intellectual scope and its poetic resources, is still not even correctly posed.

The elder poets, the poets of my own day, like Slessor and Robert Fitzgerald, are by far the most technically gifted; but because of their twist of isolation they cannot connect up with the national needs. The only side of the pioneer-tradition they carry on is the damn-all side, which becomes in Slessor a witty and delightfully decorative despair, and in Fitzgerald a defiant sense of doom, wearing down into an intolerable strain:

Out of it
once again the tentative migration; once again
a universe on the edge of being born. . . .

And so they turn back to the early adventurers, the sea-explorers, for their sole emblem of valid action; the restless lost sailor seems their other-self:

Suddenly to become John Benbow, walking down William Street,
With a tin-trunk and a five-pound note, looking for a place to eat. . . .

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REVIEWS OF BOOKS

The two collections under review tend to stress this aspect of Australian verse to-day—though in a few of the poets, especially Douglas Stewart, we catch more than a note of movement forward into the needed resolutions. Outside them is the keenly striving, often-immature and yet vital work of poets like Flexmore Hudson, who feel with imaginative force the throes of development which Slessor ignores. The key-issue for Australian poetry is to combine what is best in the two attitudes, to learn from Lawson and Brennan and McCrae alike, to pick up at the point where Slessor gave up the daimon, and carry his freshness of fancy and ease of unspoilt diction into new levels where it can mate afresh with the folk-elements. Then, maybe, poetry will give the required lead to prose, and between the two of them the creative national idiom will happily emerge.

JACK LINDSAY

EDITORIAL

August, 1948

GIVE me my gloves: it would be better to take an umbrella. —So said the grammar, and so said I. Snow-bound in St. Moritz, the words took on added meaning and with the thermometer at no degrees, 'sunny Italy' called more than usual. The main thing was to get away before the passes were blocked. 'At what hour is there a post-bus? For Maloja, Menaggio, Milan. It is to Padua that I wish to go. At seven, at eight, never, on working days only.'—I have always wanted to live in the world created by the compilers of grammars. 'When does the train leave for Florence? If you are in a hurry, take the airplane to Marseilles. There is the Cape Trafalgar.' Surely, space is here conquered as compellingly as by jet-propulsion? In what other dimension can you say 'Is that Mr X on the phone? I shall complain to the supervisor' or exclaim on arrival at hotel 'Are you the chambermaid? Call the waiter. I must see a mechanic at once.' The chambermaid (or waiter—it can scarcely be the mechanic) is equal to the occasion. 'Tea is served. There are not enough cups. I will bring you coffee and radishes.'

I used to think, and I was not alone in thinking, that these seemingly contradictory sentences were assembled at random. But my Engadin exile revealed a plan, a plot and a *dramatis personæ* behind them. Slowly, as I read (and the thermometer sank), characters emerged. First, the Bluff Traveller, jovial, definite in his requests but anxious to cause little trouble. Next, the Imperious Unconfident who meets, or makes, trouble half-way. He it is who invariably finds flies in his ointment, loses his luggage and tips with the graceful benediction, 'I am giving you what you deserve, neither more nor less. It is too much.' The fact that the town he is in is strange to him never debars him from being sure that 'you are taking me the longest way round'. The Bluff Traveller says at once 'I want only the most important information, the rest does not matter' (so admirable, though foredoomed, an approach to

life) and he declares in the dining-room, 'Any entrée you like, provided it is the best. Soup, cigars, a liqueur.' The Imperious Traveller, on the other hand, though limited in his vocabulary, is not in his demands. 'A table near the window—larger than this (that)—near the fire—not exposed to the draught. Take away those flowers and bring fresh (ones)'. In trains, in theatres, in trams he cries to high heaven 'Is it unreasonable to want ventilation? Change seats with my wife. Close the door. Take up this carpet. I insist on travelling half-price.'

Between these extremes comes the Unfortunate. This one has only to arrive anywhere to be at once stricken with agues and attacks of all kinds, not excluding amputation. He, or she, is a symposium of symptoms. No sooner told that the post-office is shut than 'My ankles are swollen and I have just been sick.' Being directed to the Cathedral, it becomes necessary to 'Extract two front teeth at once. On Wednesday. To-morrow. Last week.' He it is who suffers from the fact that 'this turbot (sole, egg), is not fresh' but, nothing daunted, manfully asks for 'Some crab, juggéd hare, whippéd cream'. Faced with these disasters, real, imaginary or imminent, the other characters, those who are spoken to in such far from ingratiating terms, come up well. They have individualities of their own. One being plays the role of Chorus and throughout conversations that would shake the economy of any well, or even dis-, ordered hotel, railway station or shop, chants long lists, like a monk and/or beggar at work. 'Shoe-trees, suspenders, a knife. A pin, a pen, a perimeter. One fork, two ashtrays, a stove.' Sometimes he shows signs of being a conjuror; who else would require, all at once, 'some matches, a corkscrew, sardines'?

Discernible under many guises is the Ironist. His replies conceal threats. 'How is your brother? Indisposed. He is well. I am sorry to hear it.' His directions are jibes. 'The theatre is near. Round the corner. Four streets to the left. Across the bridge. Across the square. Uphill, Downhill. You are in the wrong room.' When all else fails, to further the interests of the Bluff, the Imperious, the Unfortunate, he resorts to proverbs. 'Make yourself honey and the flies will eat you.' I borrowed

a leaf from his book myself when, having run out of synonyms for 'storm' after a night of lamentable lightning, I observed, as I thought bravely, 'Frost never stopped weeds from growing.' The only effect of this, and one unforeseen, was that the maid hid the plug from the bathroom, so that I could no longer bathe on the sly. Truly, 'with money you will not know yourself; without it, others will not know you.'

Money is, of course, the great topic of travel, as indeed, in this miserably materialist era, it is of most things, and in Italy, as ever, the extraction of money is not only a fine art, but an article of faith. What makes it more agreeable than the form practised in England is that it is also treated as a game, not (as with us) a form of examination in which he who does best gets least.

'How much? Too much. Too little. You buy?'

'I have no money.'

'We have no money. We have too much. Five thousand, ten thousand, one hundred. Two hundred and fifty-eight thousand. It is nothing at all.'

The world of the grammars! The world upside down. Only to be interpreted in phrase-book diction. Man's soul talks in pidgin to-day. 'Seven half-crowns for one pound. Sterling-paper or cheque? You sell cigarettes? You buy cigarettes? Three-fifty lire. Very stale, very fresh. Come inside.'

All so familiar, all as it was—by comparison with elsewhere, a little more so, indeed. Listening, looking, remembering, I realized anew the world upside down and that grammar-jargon is the only answer to the questions one is asked—'Why did the soldiers not troop the colour? Why did the soldiers work at docks? You export so much, why do you not export your Government?' and, most frequent of all, 'why did Italy win the war?'

Travelling down, how true it seemed. Labour-troubles, of course. Political slogans, of all parties, everywhere. Strikes while I was in Verona (tear-gas and thunder seem my travelling companions). Poverty—as there always had been; as there always will be with excessive birth-rate, population being the world's major problem and the prime cause of wars. But as well as poverty—plenty—as elsewhere there is not.

Belgium and Holland recover; France, poor France, struggles uncertainly. But Italy—what a difference! Are all these unpatched tablecloths at the cafés pre-war? Are all the nappery, curtains, left-over? Food more lavish than in Switzerland, with eggs for breakfast and five-course meals as a matter of course (I speak only of Verona, Padua, Venice, but correspondents report much the same from elsewhere). One knows that the country is flooded with American aid (of more use to France), sent in as bulwark against communism, emotionally as much as economically. And how the Italians respond! The buoyant and, not to strain a point, versatile Italian temperament is delighted to have been once again on the right side. It will not last—some say three years is the limit, and that seems optimistic to me. Meanwhile, outwardly, Venice decays—as, outwardly, Venice always has. A lack of paint, cracked shutters on boarded-up palazzos, slogans on walls and well-heads remind one, perhaps to one's surprise, of London: but there are still peanuts galore for the pigeons, and they still point out where Browning died, where Byron lived. In the Scuola di San Giorgio Schiavanni, before the Carpaccios, the old guardian's eyes lit up when I mentioned Ruskin. 'English not find here much now. This year, you come the first. But *then*—ah!' and I fell to thinking what a reputation they left among the stones of Venice, and what a reputation we shall *not* leave, even were we capable, this generation of Englishmen no longer able to stay abroad long enough to study, to learn, to write of and so to teach others to understand the living message of the greatest artists of Europe.

Ruskin is not thought of much to-day nor thought much of when he is thought of. It may be hazarded that many of the fellow-travelling debunkers have not lately read him. His insistence on the story-telling aspect, the 'literary', as they call it, significance of a picture drew scorn on him from a generation in whose steps a later is too lazily content glibly to follow. But those who do read him to-day find his symbolical and almost anthropological approach remarkable for his time. *St. Mark's Rest*, I would say, wears very well, nor does it weaken my thesis to quote Chapter XI, which was not

written by him but by a pupil, J. R. Anderson, whose insight Ruskin was the first to extol. Of these Carpaccios depicting St. George, Anderson has much to say, pertinent to us now. Having classed St. Jerome, whose pictures line one wall, as the philosopher saint, and George as the active guardian-saint, he points out that in Carpaccio's scene of the killing of the dragon the spear is broken. 'The spear was type of the strength of human wisdom. This checks the enemy in his attack, subdues him partly, yet is shattered, having done so much, and of no help in perfecting the victory or in reaping its reward of joy.'

That there should be a reward, and that its form should be joy may seem a touching belief to-day, as outworn as the Doge's idea of a republic of aristocracy, but there is much to remember and to discover both in *St. Mark's Rest* and in San Giorgio Schiovanni: though I still regret that Engadin snow which sent me down from the tangible heights.

ON 'PARADISE LOST'

NORMAN DOUGLAS

MILTON's 'brazen throat of war' has not spared my flat in Florence. The destruction by dynamite of a neighbouring bridge shattered the windows and knocked down the plaster and all internal partitions; soon enough much wilful damage was done to the furniture by a Fascist family who were dumped into the place by the authorities in 1941 and occupied it till the autumn of 1947 at a nominal rent, of which I shall never see a penny. Cost of repairs : Well over a million lire.

My books, though packed in wooden cases and stored by the same authorities in a remote house, underwent nevertheless a mysterious pilfering, a pilfering by two different hands. The first looter was an ignoramus, possibly some soldier, who picked up whatever he fancied and often contented himself with a single volume out of a set of two or more. The second was the reverse: an expert, a bibliophile. He knew what he was about and has left me to deplore the disappearance, among other works, of some scarce publications dealing with the Alps, Mangoni's *Novelle Storiche* unknown to bibliographers, the first edition (1750) of Secondo's account of Capri, Persico on Massalubrense (1644)—the last two being worth their weight in gold (provided the binding be not too heavy). I shall not linger over my losses. Others have had worse luck.

One volume of no great rarity survived both depredations, the Neapolitan *Album Scientifico Artistico Letterario* of 1845. It is valuable because it contains a paper by a certain Zicari, tracing the origin of Milton's *Paradise Lost* to a sacred tragedy entitled *Adamo Caduto* or *The Fall of Adam* which was written by a Calabrian monk named Salandra. The merit of this discovery belongs to Zicari whose article, a laborious piece of work, runs to some 10,000 words. There exists an earlier

edition, which I have not seen, in the British Museum library : Borel and Bompard, Naples, 1844.

I made a précis of it for the November, 1908, number of the *Atlantic Monthly*, and this précis afterwards came to form Chapter XXI of my *Old Calabria* (1915). It was somewhat surprising, I thought, that no notice was taken by Milton scholars of either of these two publications of mine, since they announced what I still consider to be 'a discovery of primary importance for the history of English letters'. The student of Milton, while reading these present lines, would do well to have Chapter XXI of *Old Calabria* at hand, for although there are many unavoidable repetitions, the chapter contains material which does not reappear in these pages.

Some details about Zicari will be found on p. 161 of *Old Calabria*. For his quotations from *Paradise Lost* he used a relatively late (1818) Italian version by Paolo Rolli, a writer who published in 1735 the first translation of the English poem. Rolli was a Fellow of our Royal Society. His work has been praised by some and censured by others, such as Andrea Maffei, who complains that his anti-protestantism clashed with Milton's anti-catholicism to such an extent that parts of his version do not faithfully reproduce the English text. So another translator, Lazzaro Papi, also tells us that 'I removed or corrected, to the best of my ability, some short heterodox passages'. The library of Harvard College possesses a copy of the 1818 edition, and Mr. Cottrell tells me that its page numbers 'correspond neatly' to Zicari's references. Rolli need not detain us. We have the English original.

Zicari's style is involved and sometimes obscure. The sense of his third paragraph, for instance, is intelligible neither to me nor to Italian friends who have read it. When he quotes from *Paradiso Perduto* I do not reproduce the corresponding lines from Milton; I translate Rolli literally in order to show what difference, if any, exists between his version and our English epic. Lovers of Milton will find no difficulty in tracking down these quotations.

As to Salandra's *Adamo Caduto*—it must be one of the rarest books on earth. Up to a few years ago only one copy was known to exist: that in the Naples National Library. Another

has since passed through my hands and found a home (on the 22nd November, 1926) in the library of Harvard College, whose authorities may find it convenient to produce sooner or later a few photostat copies for the use of students. I have yet to hear of a third *Adamo Caduto*.

How Milton became acquainted with Salandra's tragedy we cannot say. Maybe some friend of the Manso circle sent or brought him a copy. The matter is not profoundly interesting. That he did become acquainted, that he thought highly of it, will be clear from what follows.

I should like to add that I did not discover Zicari. He was discovered, so far as the English public is concerned, by a scholar who signs himself S. H. and who wrote an article dated 'Athenæum, Dec. 3, 1850' which appeared in Volume XXXV of the *Gentleman's Magazine* under the title: THE CHARGES OF PLAGIARISM BROUGHT AGAINST MILTON—WAS HE INDEBTED TO THE ADAMO CADUTO OF SALANDRA?

I have read this article with considerable astonishment (the edition consulted by the writer was that of 1844). He makes a mess of the names; he speaks of Zicari as 'Paola', confusing the name of the author with the name of his birth-place (Zicari was born in Paola in Calabria). This is just a little blunder. The only significant sentence I can find bearing on the present subject is the following: 'The fact that he (Milton) saw this work (Salandra's *Adamo Caduto*) is less probable than that he had read the *Adamo* of Andreini.' This is important. It may, or rather must, be taken to suggest that Milton was unaware of the existence of Salandra's tragedy: a serious blunder.

To set the matter at rest I am now publishing an English version of Zicari's entire text; it may help to decide the question of Milton's indebtedness to Italian writers. The reader will then be in a position to judge as to the accuracy of the sentence just quoted, and whether it be not more correct to speak of *Paradise Lost* as a transfusion, in general and in particular, of Salandra's *Adamo Caduto* which Milton, according to Mr. S. H., is conjectured never to have seen.

And now for Zicari's article. It is in the shape of a letter addressed to his friend Francesco Ruffa, who is described as *Regio Revisore delle opere teatrali*, which means, I think, textual reviser of plays submitted for performance, and is preceded by the following quotation from the French:

Ceux dont les Italiens modernes et les autres peuples ont presque tout appris, les Grecs et les Romains, adressaient leurs ouvrages, sans la vaine formule d'un compliment à leurs amis et aux maîtres de l'art. Les Italiens ont été les restaurateurs de presque tous les beaux arts, et les inventeurs de quelques uns . . .

VOLTAIRE, lettre à M. le Marquis Scipion Maffei.

The article bears the title:

ON THE DISCOVERY
OF THE ITALIAN ORIGINAL
WHENCE MILTON DREW HIS POEM
OF
PARADISE LOST

and opens thus (my few interpolations are in square brackets):

On earlier occasions, dear friend, I already spoke to you about a literary discovery which redounded to the great honour of our country, promising you a dissertation on the subject; but various incidents caused me to break my word, and you meanwhile may be interested to learn what it is. Since I am addressing you, I have no need to display erudition, much less to take on the air of a pedant. I am in the country with very few books at hand; I will therefore save up the dissertation for another time and tell you about nothing but the discovery.

It has been said that Milton drew the idea and the design of his *Paradise Lost*, one of the masterpieces of modern epic poetry, from the tragedy called *Adamo* by Andreini, the Italian comic writer—Voltaire, in his *Essay on Epic Poetry*, alludes to this, English writers agree with him; and among ourselves it is confirmed by the attestation of our historians, not the last of them being Mazzuchelli and Tiraboschi.

There are those who add that one honours Andreini too highly in saying that he may have supplied Milton with the least accidental motive towards conceiving the plot of his poem. Too much boasting (*orgoglio*); I respect the country of Shakespeare, that original genius from whom Voltaire himself has been accused of borrowings; but one could have spoken more becomingly of an Italian, remembering how much foreigners owe to Italy. [The sense may be this: why should anybody think it too much honour for Andreini to have inspired Milton?]

Milton loved our language: he made a long sojourn in the *bel paese*, and there kept up an unbroken intercourse with our men of letters. Hence Müller observes that he drew from our Dante that sombre, tenebrous, gloomy, and resolute spirit which permeates *Paradise Lost*; a verdict which Voltaire had already pronounced.

Moreover, who will deny that the battle between the good and the bad angels, the speeches of the leaders on both sides, and the general plot of the story, so much admired by Addison and the Earl of Roscommon—who will deny that these were taken by Milton from the *Angeleide* of our Erasmo Valvazone, printed in Milan as early as 1590? Who will contradict us when we say that Milton imitated various beauties in Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*, seeing that the *Spectator* itself vouches for this, while refusing to enumerate them in order, as it says, that greater honour may not accrue to the Italian poet, whom it considers of merit inferior to that of the Englishman? Lastly, what forbids us from adding with Paolo Rolli, author of the *Life of Milton*, and with Voltaire, censor of his poem, that Milton thought well to pluck flowers also from our Petrarca, our Ariosto and our Galilei, with a view to decorating his book with them? Milton therefore owes to us not only the idea of his poem, but the fairest parts of its fabric.

Up to this point, my learned friend, I have touched only upon matters known in the republic of letters. But what then, you will say, is your discovery? Here it is:

I have in my hands a sacred tragedy bearing the title: *Adamo Caduto*. Its author is Father Serafino della Salandra of the order of S. Francis of Assisi. It was printed at Cosenza in

the year 1647. Would you believe it? From this sacred tragedy Milton drew the idea, the design, the parts and the finest thoughts of his poem.

Let us begin with the proofs of chronology. The first edition of *Paradise Lost* saw the light in London in 1666 or, as others maintain, in 1669. The tragedy of *Salandra* had already been published in Cosenza nineteen or twenty-two years earlier.

Milton made a long stay at Naples in the house of Marquis Manso, where he wrote Latin and Italian poems. There was born the first idea of wishing to compose an epic poem; there he must have read *Salandra's* sacred tragedy [impossible, since it was not yet printed] which was passing through the hands of everybody at the time. Probably no one, we repeat, ignores the fact that Milton delighted in reading our poets.

Having determined incontestably the priority of *Adamo* over the poem of *Paradise Lost*, let us place them side by side in order to prove the uniformity of structure in both works, as well as that of their various parts and finest thoughts. I will look at *Paradise Lost* through the magnifying-glass of Addison, Milton's greatest eulogist, without dwelling on the passages taken from ancient classics, or from Italian and German writers which, under the specious name of imitations, are plagiarisms pure and simple.

Addison writes that before composing, or passing judgment upon, a poem, it is necessary to examine its plot or subject. Such was Aristotle's method. Let us therefore begin with this. The invention, that is, the honour of the choice of subject in the two works, is ours, whether we go back to the *Adamo* of Andreini, or prefer to take our stand with *Salandra*. The universe plunged in unhappiness through the frailty of the first man; the goodness and the just punishment of the Creator; the origin of our misfortunes and of our sins—these, we repeat with Voltaire, are a theme worthy of the boldest pen and, let us add, confer honour on him who first courageously turned them to account.

Milton in his poem introduces God, the first man, the first woman, and the Serpent, angels, demons, death, sin; and

Father Salandra places precisely the same personages on the stage. Milton has therefore taken the design from the last-named. I could examine with you Salandra's tragedy in order to convince you of this, but I will reserve it for a second letter, because with this one I wish to arrive quickly at my purpose. [I have failed to discover a second letter.] Let us now compare the various parts of both structures.

Milton opens his poem by setting forth the argument, and Salandra does the same in his Prologue. He invokes the *Spirit which operates* in the first moanings of nature by means of prodigies, and this exordium, according to Addison, touches the apex of sublimity both for its language and its sentiments. Salandra begins the action by causing the *Omnipotence which creates* to open the scene, and counts up its own marvels in the most sublime and poetic language. The *Spirit which operates* and the *Omnipotence which creates* are nothing but Divinity itself.

Thereafter Milton records the fall of the angels into a desert spot burning with sulphur unconsumable. He proceeds to report the conference of the demons, their speeches, and the proposal to meet in a general council elsewhere, in order the better to deliberate as to their common interests.

This council is described in the second book of Milton's poem; the various opinions of the rebellious angels are there discussed, and the idea of once more making war upon the Eternal is approved. It is decided to contrive by means of deceit the fall of man, who is hated and envied, in order that—the Omnipotent repenting of having created him and thus driving him out of the delights of Eden—their own faction might derive profit.

In the first scene of Act II of his play Salandra similarly calls together the demons in council. There we read of their fall from Heaven, we read the various reproaches to which Milton's demons treat each other. The description of the site is the same, so are the speeches, and I will return to them when I come to comparing the ideas of both poets. Man is envied; they plot his fall by means of deceit and decide to meet in council in the Abyss, in order that man may become the enemy of God and their prey.

In the third scene of the same act Megea [Milton's grisly Terror], in a soliloquy, depicts Hell and that which lives in Hell in the same manner as Milton had described it. In the fourth scene of Act I, the eighth of Act II, and the ninth of Act III, are introduced the demons haranguing and deliberating on the fall of man for the same reasons and by the same means as those brought forward by the author of *Paradise Lost*.

Milton, at the end of his second book, introduces Sin, Death, and the most *malicious* of the demons to plot the ruin of the human race. He brings in Heat, Cold, Damp, Dry. In the same manner Salandra personifies and puts on the stage Sin, Death, *Malice*, Earth, Water, Air and Fire.

In the third book the Almighty foresees the effects of the attempt in the Abyss and decides to have pity on man deceived, and to prepare his redemption. With the same object in view and in order to say the same thing, Salandra introduces Omnipotence, Mercy, an Angel, and the Goodness of God.

In the fourth book Milton sends Satan into the earthly paradise, and paints that lovely abiding-place with the colours of a magic brush. Salandra also depicts for us that blissful life, that spot and those joys, in tints which are no disgrace to the closing [?] years of his century.

In the fifth and sixth book Milton has brought together the rebellion of the angels, the battles and the defeat of the rebels. Salandra in his work has scattered the same information here and there, although this part of *Paradise Lost* is drawn straight out of the *Angelerde* of our Valvazone, from whom the English author has both borrowed the idea and copied all the circumstances.

The miracle of the creation of the world and of that of man, and the prohibition against eating one of the fruits of Eden, are the argument of the seventh and eighth book of *Paradise Lost*. Salandra treats of this sublime subject in the first and third scene of Act I, and in the seventh scene of Act III of his tragedy.

In his eighth book Milton reports the conversation between the serpent and Eve, the eating of the forbidden apple, and

the despair of our first parents. Salandra says the same things in the fifth and sixth scene of Act II of his *Adamo*.

The sentence of God against the transgressors, the triumph and the consultations of Satan, the rejoicing of Death and Sin, the quarrels between Eve and Adam, their repentance and their prayers are expressed to the life in the tenth book of *Paradise Lost*.

Death surprising Eve after her fall into the toils of the Serpent, who is proud of his conquest; the joy of the demons and their deliberations; Adam's affliction; Sin and Malice assailing our first parents; the call (*chiamata*) and the decree of God; their flight, shame and repentance, are the themes of scene 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 of Act II, and scene 1 of Act III of Salandra's tragedy.

Finally, in books 11 and 12 of his poem, Milton recounts the forgiveness granted to the repentant Adam and Eve through the intercession of the Son of God, and the decree which expels them from Paradise. Thereafter, by means of the Archangel Michael, are placed before their eyes the miracles of the creation and all the series of human misfortunes resulting from their first sin. They see Cain killing Abel, they watch the discords of their future progeny and then the consequent punishment. They survey all the evils which arise from the scourge of war, the vices of the antediluvians, and the most remarkable facts as well as the principal personages of Sacred History; the Deluge, the Ark, Tower of Babel, Moses, Abraham, Isaac, Joshua, and the Messiah, *repairer* of the original sin. The poem closes with a picture of the Passion of Jesus Christ, and with the egress from Eden of Adam and Eve, led out by the Archangel himself, the narrator of the future happenings to their race.

Similarly Salandra, from the third to the fifth act of his tragedy, occupies himself solely with the triumph of Mercy over Death and Sin, thanks to the intercession of the *great repairer* of the fall of Adam; with the miracles of creation; with the fratricide committed by Cain and with the other human misfortunes; with the disorders and vices into which the human race degenerates in consequence of the first sin; with the *infernal gift* of war and its attributes and effects,

offspring of an *infernal policy* (politica); with an historical narrative of the Passion of Jesus Christ; with the repentance of Adam and Eve; with the comfort which the Angel brings them in announcing the advent of the Messiah, and with their egress from the terrestrial paradise.

This brief comparison between Milton's *Paradise Lost* and the sacred tragedy of Father Salandra demonstrates clearly, my learned and good friend, that the component parts of the structure of both works are the same, and chronology decides which of the two productions is the original.

For the rest, not only has the English poet copied from ours the component parts of his structure; he wished also to enrich himself with the plunder of Salandra, appropriating his beauties and even adopting his defects. If we compare the ideas, the thoughts, and the words of the two poets we shall remain convinced of this. For *Paradise Lost* I shall avail myself of the version by Rolli, Venice, 1818, always keeping an eye, however, on Addison's *Spectator*.

I have shown you that the merit of the invention of the *subject* in Milton's poem is entirely ours. I can tell you the same of the invention of the *characters* and depicting of the *usages* (dipintura del costume).

The multitude and variety of characters introduced by Homer and Virgil is, according to Addison, a beauty which is lacking in *Paradise Lost*. The two ancient poets knew in this respect when and how to become diffuse, since the universe lay distended in all its splendour before their eyes. Milton on the other hand was obliged to restrict himself to two single individuals, who represented the whole human race at the time of the infancy of the earth. But, Addison adds, in those two personages Milton has contrived to present to us four distinct characters, displaying them to us as perfect and innocent, guilty and fallen. In view of the poverty of his theme, he has enriched himself with *imaginary* individuals and with *allegories*.

There is no doubt that the character of Adam and of Eve, subdivided into *four states*, has been taken from Salandra's

tragedy. You may convince yourself of this on reading the third and seventh scenes of Act I, the fifth and tenth of Act II, scene 1, 4, 5, 6, and 7 of Act III, and the seventh of Act V. To him therefore belongs the glory of the invention attributed to Milton. As regards the *allegories* derided by Voltaire, allowed by Muratori in certain cases, and disapproved of by Addison: if they are a defect in Milton's poem, then he copied them from the Italian poet; Salandra, before Milton, had placed Death and Sin on the scene.

Still speaking to you of the characters, I must tell you that the character of Satan is likewise delineated on the Italian canvas. His pride, his envy, his vindictive spirit, his obduracy, his despair and impenitence, which Addison praises as the work of Milton, are so many flashes which gleam brightly in the tragedy of *Adamo Caduto* (pp. 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 60, 61, 65, 78, 85, 129, 131, 220, 226).

To proceed. Salandra (p. 57) has located Megera in Hell, and Milton has painted with the same colours (pp. 97, 98) his Terror in that place of torment. Their characters are identical. Terror in Milton (98) dominates over Satan, endeavours to affright him, threatens him, and speaks to him of chastisement. One of the duties of Megera in Salandra's tragedy (64, 125 to 131) is to dominate, to terrorize and chastise the demons themselves. Milton (96, 97) depicts Hell, *Cerberus* and the other monsters which Hell produces, distinguished as 'Hydras, Gorgons, and horrible Chimaeras' who guard its entrance precisely as Salandra (58) had introduced Megera when she describes it, and locating there the same animals and speaking of herself. Terror as personified by Milton (98) *moves hastily with vast horrid strides* [Rolli probably inserted 'vast' for purposes of scansion], and Salandra (59) had said under the allegory of the dire Megera 'In terrifying, in affrighting I am so fast that every shelter (*riparo*) is vain'. Salandra's *serpentine witch* (57) bearing the name of Megera, with *viperine tresses*, who guards the portal of the abyss, is indicated on page 99 of Milton's poem, which assigns to her the same position.

But what idea, asks Addison, does greater honour to Milton than that of having derived the names of his demons from the catalogue of the idols of various nations of antiquity, copying

their character and attributes? And yet this idea is also Salandra's; the difference exists solely in the number of persons introduced. It can easily be noted that in a tragedy one cannot allow so many idols and demons to speak as is fitting in a poem which can give a list of them.

You will therefore observe that Salandra has put on the stage Lucifer or Satan, Belial, and Behemoth. You are aware that Belial was a god of the Sidonians, and Behemoth an allegorical idol, figured in the shape of an enormous animal. Hence Salandra (46) had said: 'You speak like a beast, and such is your name.' Milton (52, 62, 256), appropriating these names, made use of them in his poem, and has copied from Salandra their manners (costume), their acts, their speeches.

The character of Belial is sardonic in Milton, as it is in Salandra, albeit in a different sense: this resemblance will certainly not escape your eye when reading the two poems. Milton (62, 77, 78, 23) represents him as shameless, gallant, timid, a laggard using the language of mockery, and Addison discovers beauty in these contrasting qualities. Here is Salandra's highly coloured portrait of him (50, 64, 65, 127):

'You, Belial, hide yourself here with your followers.—To open the eyes in order to see the aspect (*aspetto*)—The savours and the delights.—The arms will be those of love. . . High is the daring of love.—The arrow of love outstrips that of Mars.—Without pity (*senzamerce*) that *gallant* Belial—Who also took a great part in the battle—Why must he remain? . . . To tell the truth, I confess myself to be *cowardly*—To so difficult a deed. . . Alas, have mercy, my prince! . . . What say you, Belial, Michael conquered me?—I say no—Why? I should be a liar—And had my high state a fall?—It raised itself rather above every other throne—Is there one in Heaven who outshines me?—In comparison with you they are all glimmerings.—Since you, Great Master, etc.'

The character of the dissolute, gallant, slothful, cowardly, mocking Belial, which Addison admires, which Voltaire censures, which Rolli defends, has simply been imitated by Milton. . . .

A short while ago I showed you that the invocation with which Milton opens his poem is taken from the first pages of the tragedy of *Adamo Caduto*. Hear now how the two poets agree also in their ideas and in their terms. Milton (46) prays the Creative Spirit to tell the reason why our first parents, favoured by Heaven and lords of the universe, 'In that so happy state . . . moved to revolt—From their Creator, and to transgress his will—In one single restriction? . . . To that foul—Desertion who first seduced them?—It was the infernal serpent. . . .'

Salandra, in the prologue and in the first scene, had caused Omnipotence and the Goodness of God to descend from the eternal heights in order to recount the miracles of the Creator who fashions man like himself and makes him 'True prince of the universe, who—plucked the only one. . . The forbidden apple—Induced thereto by the monster, the prompting dragon . . . By the perfidious serpent. . . .'

I have told you that the choice of the spot into which the angels fell, and that of the place in which they united themselves for council were found by Salandra, and that the English poet availed himself of them. Here now are some more precise demonstrations of this plagiarism.

Milton (98, 115, 119, 200, 101) undertakes to relate to us the fall of the rebel angels and of Lucifer their leader, who 'To follow him drew—the *third* of the great Host of Heaven—Innumerable . . . as the *nocturnal stars*—The third part of the sons of Heaven'.

Then placing in the crucible the gravity of the fall of the angels and that of the sin of man, he distinguishes that 'The first fell—of their own will, tempting—and depraving themselves: man—Fell deceived by him who first fell—Therefore may man find forgiveness . . . Here I now am, life for life for him—I offer . . .'

These thoughts are Salandra's (47, 238, 239, 245). This is how he had expressed himself: 'You drew—from the *stars* a *third* the most luminous and lovely—Less excusable was the first sin—that self-love alone tempted the angel—But in that conflict man—Had three antagonists (*gladiatori*)—the serpent, self-love, and the beauteous apple—To pardon is kingly—It

is God's attribute to pardon. . . . I decree that my son wash away your sin—He will come to die, so that you may live.'

It is to be observed that the desert site into which the rebel angels fell after their defeat is described by Milton (47, 52, 53, 80, 238) as a *pool of flames*, which consumes without causing death, receptacle of torment eternal, infinite, and where reigns neither hope nor repose—He adds: 'There lies beyond that wave—a *frozen* [region]—A fiery (*fiero*) continent bereft of light—. . . their sadness increases . . .—Thence they pass through many—Obscure and fearsome valleys—Through many dismal regions—Hell, fit habitation for those impious ones—For ever full of inextinguishable fire—Abode of miseries and of torments'.

These images, which pleased Addison so greatly, are also Salandra's (48, 49, 50, 124). He thus describes the same site: 'That *frozen* shadow—Filled with eternal weeping—Is therefore called your infernal abiding-place—Not a rapid onward-flowing torrent—But rather a *pool of fire*. . . . Eternal is your flame. . . . Without hope. . . . That between burning heats—You be consumed, and yet not die—Where burning flame is never lacking—Therefore in us are all extreme excesses—Of miseries . . . Torments, hurts, and outrages . . . ' Also the expression *darkness visible* employed in speaking of the desert site into which the afflicted angels fell, derided by Voltaire and defended by Rolli and Addison, seems to have been taken by Milton (47) from Salandra's (224) 'O *shadow* which illuminates me.'

One talks further of the invention of the demons' council as being a daughter of Milton's imagination: this episode is praised to the skies; but it is really Salandra's. This you will have noticed, my valued friend, in the comparisons between various passages in the Italian and English works. The rebel angels, in the tragedy of *Adamo Caduto*, gather together in the Abyss at the sound of a trumpet (51, 52) to attempt every manner and means to ruin man, devising against him losses and calamities, setting snares for him (58, 60, 63), perverting his heart and his thoughts (55, 155) with the object of making him their slave (49, 113), together with all his perfidious progeny (20, 83). Without going into more minute particulars, which also resemble

each other, you will find in Milton these same expressions, almost as if they had been reported word for word (64, 67, 71, 114, 115, 279).

Nor will I speak of the speeches of Satan and Beelzebub, who in Milton (49-64, 80, 82) deplore the plight of their empyreal patrimony, being obliged to depart from Heaven and to take up their abode in the deepest abysses. I will not quote their complaints (291) because God subjected to the service of man even the wings of angels: they are the same as those which Salandra puts into the mouth of his demons (45-52, 61).

Satan in Milton (54) boasts that although he is in Hell, he is free, and reigns there with his comrades at his own choice. Lucifero in Salandra (49) says 'Hither my own will—Not the will of others drew me. . . . I am sovereign, here I am leader . . . He endeavoured, but failed to drive me hence—Whither my will alone has drawn and driven me.'

Beelzebub in Milton (87) ends his speech against the human race with these words. ' . . . Seduce them to our party—Till their God becomes their foe.'

Lucifero in Salandra (51) concludes that, united, they must study the means 'Whereby man may become—Enemy of God and the prey of Hell.' Do not these words and thoughts resemble one another?

The proposal to seduce man in order to make him an enemy of God having been accepted in the council of demons, Milton (57-88) causes all the spirits convened in the congress to inquire as to which of them will undertake the dangerous and most hazardous enterprise. He then raises to his feet Satan who, as their leader, decides to take the task upon himself (89, 90).

In the same manner Salandra (64) puts the same question into the mouth of Lucifero: 'Which of you will have the courage?' And causes him to conclude: 'Certainly this work—Is designed for my hand.'

I could be more circumstantial, but it is wearisome to draw a more minute comparison between that which the rebel angels say in Milton and in Salandra; and I will leave it to him who reads the two works to convince himself that there is a perfect resemblance between them. Let us move forward.

The idea of making Death the child of Sin, of which Milton (101) makes such parade, which Addison esteems so greatly as an allegory, which Voltaire blames and praises at the same time, has it not been taken straight out of the tragedy of *Adamo Caduto* (97)?

SIN TO ADAM. I am produced by you, and yet you know me not? And this so mis-shaped creature is my daughter, just now generated by me on the earth.

DEATH TO SIN. And I am she whom you sent into the world.

Voltaire thinks that this fiction is a mere play of words on the part of Milton, because if *Sin* were of the masculine gender in English as it is in all other languages [how about German?], says he, the machine would fall to pieces. Rolli who, on the other hand, recognizes in this invention a flight of poetic fancy, replies to the effect that he, Rolli, Milton's translator, has called *Sin* by the name of *Fault* (Colpa), thus making her feminine; but he adds that there is an Italian saying to the effect that *Sin generates Death*. These grammatical subtleties are nauseating, when they are taken note of in masterpieces of art. I laughed when I read in Salvini, censor of the most pleasing of Tasso's songs, that a flower-strewn hill could not be likened to a maiden crowned with flowers, because a hill is of the masculine gender; that the sea is able to give birth in Greek and French, because in the grammar of those two languages it is of the feminine gender, but not in the tongue of Latium and of Italy, where it is of the other gender. Venerable pedantry!

But in our case, even when bowing before the laws of grammar, neither Rolli nor Voltaire seem to have hit the mark. Milton classifies Sin of masculine gender as *generating*, since everybody knows that the male generates and the female conceives. Therefore the perversity or the absurdity which Voltaire notes does not exist; neither was there need of the medicine wherewith Rolli tried to cure it by changing Sin (masculine) into Fault (feminine). Moreover, Milton had merely copied from Salandra, with whom Sin is *masculine* and *generates* in precisely the sense of the Italian proverb quoted by Rolli.

Milton's Sin (100) tells how he, born in Heaven, vanquished and seduced the most stubborn among the angels in Paradise,

whence he fell after the egress of the impure spirits; and Sin in *Salandra* (51-3) tells you: 'And as you well know—I ruled over Celestial things—I was born in Heaven, and thence soon removed—Because there my hope was lost.' The thought is the same in both poets.

In depicting the earthly Paradise Milton, as Addison observes, poured forth all the ornaments of language and of style. Hence you cannot but admit that in this part of his poem the phrases stand forth with greater elaboration, longer and more detailed are the descriptions of the delights wherewith the author of nature had enriched Eden, and which were well adapted for giving us an idea of the blissful state from which our first parents fell.

Now read the entire third scene of Act I of *Salandra's* tragedy; fix your eyes upon the first lines of the fifth and sixth scene of Act II, and you will find that God, Earth, Air, Fire, Water, and Adam and Eve had depicted the delights of the Earthly Paradise, of that *Heaven on Earth, of that garden planted for man by the hand of God* (Milton 145; *Salandra* 16, 66) displaying all the riches of the triple realm of nature with the same profusion of ornaments and thoughts, and in the same words of which John Milton afterwards availed himself.

I will say nothing of the sublimely poetic spirit, of the tender and delicate sentiment which animates the colloquies of our progenitors throughout the fourth book of *Paradise Lost*. Addison refers to it in his *Spectator* X, and you will agree with him. But you will certainly be astonished when, on opening *Salandra's* tragedy (15, 38, 39, 40, 68, 69, 158), you discover the *Lords of the Earth* seated on the flowery brink of a fountain, before whom are assembled the various animals subject to their rule, where they take pride and pleasure—more than over the rising sun, the starlit sky, the paradise which they enjoy—in their mutual charms, the gifts of God, and express themselves in the same sense as Milton (148, 150, 161) had sung in his poem.

Glancing through the *Spectator*, you cannot but observe all the beauties wherewith Milton has embellished his description of the conflict between the good and the evil angels, which Addison attributes in great part to the ancients. Without

retracting what I said in favour of the *Angeleide* of the Italian Valvazone, I will not hide from you the fact that the idea of the duel between the Archangel Michael and Satan was suggested to Milton by Salandra, on page 49 of his tragedy.

The state of innocence, simplicity, and purity in which Milton depicts Eve, recalls the most artless favours of nature, and the Gifts which the All-Highest had bestowed on the human race before their Sin. Now as to these natural and untutored graces, not only will you find them again in Salandra's Eve, but you will see them put on the stage with greater clearness under the allegorical names of Innocence, Simplicity, and Life (14, 23, 27).

You must therefore admit that the one has presented to the other the material for the construction of his perfect edifice.

I confess that there is nothing more attractive in Milton (165, 280, 283) than that part of his poem wherein are repeated the pathetic and natural conversations of Adam and Eve, and wherein the matrimonial state is depicted and extolled. Now I assure you, my good friend, that this portion is taken wholesale from the seventh scene of Act I of *Adamo Caduto*. Following the poetic taste of his century, the Italian poet has written a tender dialogue of love between our progenitors, concluding with a vigorous eulogy of married life, in the sense of Holy Writ. The English author has derived profit from it. Now what will you say when you discover that Paolo Rolli, in his observations favourable to Milton as opposed to those of Voltaire, strives to defend and to overwhelm with praise precisely this portion, supposed by him to be of angelic coinage (*conio*)?

The happy thought of the morning hymn which, according to Addison, forms and is one of the beauties of Milton's poem (Book V), was likewise suggested by Salandra (p. 38 of his tragedy). If there is merit in the English poet's having availed himself of one of the psalms of David, we must congratulate the Italian poet who, imitating and not copying the royal prophet, has introduced, as speaking of God and praising His Omnipotence, Mercy, and the *Elements* which, personified, press forward into the abysses of creation, to render glory to the Artificer of all things.

But, speaking of the Creation, if you raise your eyebrows while reading in Milton the majestic story of the work of six days, you will remain even more surprised when you come to know that he drew the chief beauties from the tragedy of *Adamo Caduto*.

This is how Milton (244) raises the curtain of this magnificent picture: 'What—tongue or word of Seraph—could narrate the work of Omnipotence?'

Salandra (11), in drawing aside the same veil, had said: 'What tongue—albeit fashioned by God—can recount the extreme marvels of God?'

The two poets agree in their enumerations of beings created race by race, in that of the elements and of the riches of nature, in the description of the stars and of all the marvels of the universe (Milton 164, Salandra 2, 8, 10; Milton 195, Salandra 8, 32; Milton 248–50, 252–4, 255, 259, Salandra [this is not clear] 250, 251, 149, 8, 2, 9, 8, 16, 17, 10, 9, 10, 9, 10, 2). You will reply that they have both copied from the sacred pages, but there are in Milton images, thoughts, and flights of fancy which are not found in the text of *Genesis* and which, on the other hand, you will read in the tragedy of our poet.

Thereafter Milton (180) concludes: 'These are all your glorious works—Omnipotent Father of Good. . .'

And Salandra (8) had concluded: 'O my highest Lord, eternal Contriver—I well know that the work is of thine hands!'

Similarly, the two poets agree word for word in relating the creation of the first man and the first woman (Milton 114, 257–9, and 279; Salandra 2, 3, 7–13, 14–22, 26, 38–43, 148, 204) whom Milton (318) calls 'Last and best of all the works of God' after Salandra (3) had said: 'The last hand has done the most perfect work.' They are a copy of each other when they speak of the commandment of God forbidding them to eat the apple which hangs from the tree of Knowledge, planted beside the tree of Life, under promise of an eternal bliss and of the penalty of encountering death [the promise of eternal bliss or of the penalty, etc.] (Milton 145, 153–4, 164, 156–7, 177, 193; Salandra's 15–16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 70, 53). But whose is the plagiarism?

Let us proceed. Milton (242) causes the infinite Goodness to be thanked for the revelations obtained by means of the Archangel Raphael concerning the miracles of creation. It is precisely the Goodness of God and an angel who, in Salandra's tragedy, had made similar revelations in all the swollen poetical style of his day. The analogy is obvious.

You observe that Milton has brought about the fall of Eve after a dream full of suave felicity. In this dream Satan has discoursed with her and has prompted her to sin. She has followed in her dream the voice of the tempter, advancing by various and devious paths up to the tree of knowledge (176-7).

After opening their eyes, and following on the delights of mutual caresses, Salandra had, by means of Echo, instrument of Satan, caused Adam and Eve to separate, and to draw the last-named to the foot of the forbidden tree, there to be seduced by the serpent (38, 66, 68). Every one will perceive that the invention is the same: Salandra, for the rest, has inspired the idea.

But I must not pass over in silence that also the advice given by Adam to his unfortunate consort, his doubts concerning her frailty, the reflections which accompany them, the loving words by which they are alleviated in order to dissuade her from viewing or thinking about the fatal apple, which Addison skilfully considers one of the finest touches in *Paradise Lost* (178, 178, 295), belong also to the tragedy of Salandra (22, 24, 42).

Beautiful and supremely poetical, as you well know, is Milton's idea (301) of causing Eve to be surprised, alone, by Satan, among the flowers and herbs and plants, in the act of binding them together with twine of myrtle, half buried among the rose-bushes and enveloped in a cloud of perfume. On page 68 of Salandra you will find that Eve is there in the same position, and that the description of that moment is the same, summed up also on pages 16 to 17 of his tragedy.

The moment which precedes the fall of Eve is employed by Milton in depicting the infernal cunning of the serpent, who has decided to *tempt first the weaker part* (299). He portrays its sinuous twistings and trailings among the roses (302), sometimes raising and sometimes intruding its *enamelled neck* (304)

in order to attract the attention of our unhappy progenitress. She remarks it and finds it very pleasing and of *lovable engaging manners* and, on hearing it speak, she is surprised and exclaims: 'Does tongue of beast pronounce?' The dialogue continues with many thoughts which belong to the tragedy of *Adamo Caduto*.

According to Salandra (68), the serpent of whom it was said *you assail the weaker part* shows his cunning in front of Eve among the variety and charm of fruits, of herbs and flowers, among the animals which *row by row incline themselves* before her in the shade of fresh boughs. Eve observes it and says:

'I see the fair serpent enveloped in coils—Oh, you are here, small creature, enjoying the coolness—*Wound about* the trunk at your ease?—Oh you are beautiful, oh you are fair, oh you are pleasing!—With such diversity that surely you seem—Another starlit sky, [another] *enamelled earth*!—In truth you would gain the prize among all—If by the instinct which nature gave you—As being dumb you could be articulate—You are altogether perfect, altogether comely—Speech alone fails you—I also speak—Oh, what do I hear! You speak? (69).

In order not to weary you I will refrain from continuing on this subject, but will not absolve myself from telling you that the trouble, the pallor, the disfigurement in which Eve is surprised by Adam after the sin, expressed with so much skill by Milton (318), are a faithful copy of the very words placed by Salandra on the lips of Eve (89).

Immediately after the transgression of the divine commandment Milton (337) causes his imaginary personages, Sin and Death, to appear. Salandra (98 *seq.*) had caused the same personages to come forward in the same position. In both works they are therefore at the same place.

The flight of *Innocence* after the first sin, the entrance of *Sin* (peccato), of *Shame* and *Death* (Salandra 28, 80, 96, 113; Milton 324, 325); the *Lust* which masters the senses of Adam and Eve in consequence of their fall (Salandra 151; Milton 322); the alliance of *Sin* with *Death* to rule the earth (Salandra 78, 80, 98, 99; Milton 337); the pathetic laments of Adam over his misfortune and over the evils prepared for his progeny (Salandra 132, 137 to 143; Milton 353 to 357); the noble

phrase that none can hide himself from the all-seeing eye of God (Salandra 189; Milton 200, 329); the metaphor of the *impetuous winds* which agitated his heart between tears and sighs after the sin had been committed (Salandra 228; Milton 326); Satan's report to the demons of the decree pronounced by God against them and of the design to make good the fall of man (Salandra 85, 123, 131, 153; Milton 340 to 348); the rejoicing of the demons over the victory obtained and the despair which follows it (Salandra 123, 131; Milton 341, 348)—these are Salandra's thoughts artfully copied by Milton.

Thoughts taken from Salandra are also the alterations and changes which are noted as having taken place in the laws of nature, the miseries to which the human race is subject, and the first enmity among the animals against one another and against man after the committal of the sin (Salandra 137 to 143; Milton 352-4, 376). You will read in our poet that scarcely *had Adam and Eve stretched the hand to the fatal apple, before the earth shook, groaned and wept, the abysses trembled, rocks were broken, mountains reeled, the poles staggered, thunders rumbled, lightnings and thunderbolts burst, accompanied by hail and thick snow, and the air clothed itself in horrors and baleful shades* (Salandra 138, 142, 218, 137). On opening Milton (322) you will notice that he has copied this nearly word for word, and the *high prodigy of the eclipse* with which, according to Addison, he so greatly embellished this passage of his poem, is almost nothing but Salandra's *air clothed in horrors and baleful shades*.

In the Italian poet you will read (137, 138) that *the first sin rendered the elements rebellious and resentful, sowed turbulence, ruins and miseries and changed the flowery and green surface of the earth; that the flocks went astray and the herds fled; that the serpent crept into its hole and the monster entered into the den; that the wolf for the first time sharpened the teeth against the lamb, the fox against the fowls, and the dog caught the hare by means of speed; that the wild boar armed its tusks against the ploughman, the bear raised its claws, the porcupine scattered the quills, the three-tongued serpent lay in wait for the foot, the elephant arched its trunk, and the lion wandered through the forest intent upon prey; and where formerly all of them had fed only upon grass and drank at the fountain, now their nurture was meat and blood was their drink*. Is not this exactly what arises, thought

for thought, word for word, out of Milton's lines (354, 375, 376)?

The hunger, the thirst, the disgusting beverages and the mockeries with which Milton causes his demons to be rewarded (349-50) are nothing but a moral principle extracted from the heart (viscere) of perfect poetry, placed by Salandra on the stage with great propriety (124-132). Megea in his poem breaks out into these lines (124, 126): 'Already they well know that in the cruel Hell—The rewards are chastisement . . . Pain seems not pain to him who is accustomed to suffer.' Milton, copying him (81, 224), expresses himself thus: 'But you in Hell—Wait for chains and not for Kingdoms . . . To harden yourself so much to ills—that you no longer feel them.'

The author of *Paradise Lost* treats *ex professo* of free will, of the duties of the human race, of its frailty, of its propensity to evil, of the snares which the enemy of man sets for him, and of the help which grace lends him (114, 115, 183, 184, 405). Salandra (6, 14, 26-9) had caused God and the Angel to explain precisely that which in Milton is narrated on the same theme (articolo) by the Archangel Michael and the Eternal Being. You will observe that in *Adamo Caduto* the very words are identical (conforme).

You know how greatly Addison praises Milton because, in a poem of unlucky ending such as that of the fall of Adam, he associates the grief which Satan feels in spite of his triumphs with the vision which promises the offspring of the first man a happy future.

Open the eighth scene of Act II (page 85) and the third scene of Act III (page 131): 'Alas, my poor Kingdom, alas my—hapless Crown. . . . Alas, my sorrowful self! What an ill-fated triumph! . . .' and the sixth scene (page 243) and further on of Salandra's tragedy, and you may decide to whom this praise should be accorded.

Chiefest among the defects of which Addison accuses Milton there are, as you know, that of having personified Sin and Death, of straying often from his theme, of employing excessive acumen, which we call subtlety, of being too erudite,

and of enlarging upon free will, predestination, history, astronomy, and various other sciences.

You will have noticed, my learned friend, from a comparison between the two pictures, that these colours belong to Salandra, since they are part of the poetical outfit (costume) of his day. You will observe it still more clearly when I place before your eyes, one beside the other, the lines of the two poets. Voltaire is right when he says that some stranger of bad taste has stolen our bold metaphors, our conceits and our subtleties which belong to the first years of the seventeenth century. We can therefore pardon Milton [his defects] with a good conscience, be they even all those which the Abbé Andres counts up, provided he hands over to us, as being ours, also his own beauties.

That same astronomico-physical treatise which Milton offers us and which Addison condemns, does not belong to the English author (162). This lecture, which is a flaw in *Paradise Lost* so far as concerns Adam into whose mouth it is put, is also ours, but is placed in a better position in Salandra's tragedy. He has introduced Omnipotence as speaking of astronomy and the Elements as discoursing upon physics.

You will see from Milton (117) that men, when they wish to hearken to free conscience, will obtain other light from light well used. Salandra (27) had called conscience *free queen*, by whom the external senses are ruled, which in the internal (interno) chooses at its convenience, dominating also the intellect whence it draws light.

Milton (119) causes the Word to say that, God being appeased, man becomes just through operation (effetto) of grace which comes to all unforeseen, unentreated, unsought. Salandra (242) had expressed himself as follows: 'God being appeased, what follows thereafter, tell me? Grace, which makes him just—The gracious Omnipotence—Produces it from nothing.'

One knows that Addison criticizes Milton for having, in the last book of his poem, caused the Angel to *relate* to Adam the remainder of the Sacred Story up to the Passion of Jesus Christ, after having *displayed*, in so many visions, the history of the human race up to the first great period of nature. He

has acted, says Addison, like an artist who paints one half of a picture with colours, and then finishes it off in writing. Thereafter he proves that it was difficult for Milton to arrange matters otherwise, and examines the various beauties of this historico-theological, rather than poetical, narrative. So he passes from blame to praise, even as the spear of Achilles first wounds Telephus and then heals him.

But Salandra had put into the mouth of an angel, speaking to Adam, the same historico-theological narrative and had placed it precisely towards the end of his tragedy, as was done by Milton in his last book. Now this idea regarding the person who narrates, the person who listens, the subject of the narrative, the point of view there expressed, and the locality in which it is presented to us, belong to the Italian poet, from whom the English poet has faithfully and circumstantially taken it.

There is yet more. The *visions* which shadow forth the first period of the history of the human race belong likewise to Salandra. In the fourth act of his tragedy he brings together the story of Abel, the death of Cain, the misfortunes of the house of Lamech, and all the vices and disorders of the first race. Therefore, my good friend, he put into *action* in so many *stage scenes* that which Milton, desirous of imitating him, introduced in the same number of *picturesque visions*. There could be no better method of reconciling the need to copy with the necessity of adapting oneself to the difference which exists between a tragedy and an epic poem. We must also not overlook the fact that inventions such as these *picturesque visions* are of Italian coinage for another reason. Who does not remember, in this connection, the dream of Godfrey in the twentieth Canto of *Jerusalem Delivered*? [He means the eighteenth Book, line 628.]

But I should not finish so soon, were I to launch out into an examination of the minute details of all those portions of Salandra's tragedy which Milton has copied. You must be content if I proceed, quoting summarily from both works a few chief points in which the two poets agree, not as being the only ones to resemble each other but as being the only ones which I, wearied with this tedious task, have transcribed.

Consider therefore as portions of Salandra, both for the invention and (as regards those taken from Holy Writ) for the point of view which they emphasize (in cui spiccano):

1. The impious maxim, placed into the mouth of Satan with such propriety, namely, that it is better to reign in Hell than to serve in Heaven; and the other yet more impious one, that to displease God by disturbing Him and rendering spite for spite, if it be not a victory is at least an avengement (Milton 54, 77, 78, 292; Salandra 49, 74).

2. The confession of the impure spirits that Hell itself and a thousand more [of them] are more endurable than the anger of God and of His tormenting arm (Milton 80; Salandra 129), and that they, in changing their abode, far from being able to leave it by one step, always carry Hell without and within themselves (Milton 137, 138, 140; Salandra 204, 210).

3. The proud thought of Satan, that it would suffice him to ascend one single other degree in order to make himself Highest and to equal the throne of the Supreme Being; and his despairing lament at not being able to flee from the infinite wrath and the implacable hatred of God (Milton 139, 140, 144; Salandra 61, 130, 127, 132).

4. The fine description of the state of nature prior to the entrance of false shame, and the mischance to which we owe the loss of it (Milton 149; Salandra 44).

5. That tender agreement wherein Adam and Eve, rapt in ecstasy in the midst of delights, speak of the marital yoke and submit themselves to the will of God. 'God so commands—God is thy law and my law art thou' (Milton 161). 'Let there be one will for both of us—and may that will be altogether God's' (Salandra 42).

6. Eve's and Adam's sincere conviction that one can return to the givers their own gift, and that most tender image whereby, protesting they will never forget to love and to obey their Maker, they offer themselves as a sacrifice to God, work of His hands and His own gift (Milton 186, 195; Salandra 12-14, 22, 41).

7. The description of the throne, or chariot, of Lucifer (Milton 211; Salandra 130).

8. The picture of Malice, seductress of a thousand and thousand angels, once upright and faithful and then found to be traitors and false (Milton 217; Salandra 54).

9. The divine promise to unite in one single Kingdom Heaven and Earth, provided the divine decree be not violated: 'May earth be changed to heaven, and heaven to earth, (Milton 245).' 'Heaven inclines—Down to Earth, and Earth rises up to Heaven (Salandra 242).'

10. The triumph of Jesus Christ over Death and Sin, and the antithesis that by means of the descent of the Redeemer death has become the portal of life (Milton 119, 120, 351, 423; Salandra 122, 123, 145, 245, 250).

11. The faithful portrayal of all the imperfections and all the craftiness of woman, and the proverb that the ills of man are apt to derive their origin from woman (Milton 356-361, 392; Salandra 86, 101, 123, 201-4).

12. Adam's reproaches to Eve, and the solace of Eve and Adam up to their reconciliation (Milton 361-3; Salandra 144 *seq.*).

13. The necessity under which the first man and the first woman are described as finding themselves after the sin—the necessity of being obliged to seek a shelter from storm; the act of their repentance. the intercession of the Messiah: the beneficent effects of prayer with God and Eve's reply to the first greeting addressed to her as mother of the human race (Milton 366, 367, 368, 370, 375; Salandra 151, 231, 244, 145, 146, 119, 218).

14. The expulsion of our progenitors from Paradise, performed by means of the Archangel Michael (Milton 372, 373, 424; Salandra 117, 144).

15. The death of Abel with all the circumstances which preceded and followed it, under the form of a vision, and Adam's lament after the fratricide (Milton 382-5; Salandra 159, 160, 182, 192, 172-4, 197, 229).

16. An enumeration of all the ills of humanity, and the figure of the triumph of Death in consequence of the sin (Milton 386; Salandra 80-2, 178).

17. A theological discussion as to the causes and effects of the first sin, as being a reason for the depravity and degenera-

tion of the human race (Milton 387, 405; Salandra 26, 185, 206, 235, 236, 238).

18. The account of the discovery of the art of smelting iron, of building huts and pastoral tents, of spinning wool, of constructing harps and organs, and of fashioning so many other useful products (Milton 389; Salandra 207, 208).

19. The picture of a battle, of a siege, and of many military contrivances, followed by the saddening thought that war is nothing but a slaughter of brothers who massacre each other, impelled by the fanaticism of glory or by that of conquest, [and who] devastate or destroy the earth, reproducing once more the horror of the first fratricide (Milton 391-3; Salandra 155 to 156, 224-6).

20. The portrait of the vices of the antediluvians, the homilies which ran alongside, and the history of Noah's Ark (Milton 395; Salandra 143, 147, 155).

21. The conception (immagine) happily worded, that the rainbow is a sign of peace between heaven and earth (Milton 401; Salandra 219).

22. The tale of the irreverence of Noah's son, and of the father's curse (Milton 406; Salandra 479).

23. The historical vision (prospetto) of the birth of the Word from a Virgin by means of the power of the Highest: of the star which guided the Wise Men from the East, and of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, placed face to face with the history of Adam's transgression, in order to display successively all the expiatory acts which accompanied and followed the first sin (Milton 415-425; Salandra 243-251, 108, 145, 146, 236).

24. Lastly, the most pleasing and sublime invocation wherein, at the end (419) of the last book of *Paradise Lost*, Adam addresses the infinite Goodness, invoked and personified also by Salandra (250), to admire, in the enthusiasm of his joy, the miracles of the Redemption, an achievement far more stupendous than that of the Creation itself.

25. The conclusion of the works of the two poets with the same idea, so greatly praised by Addison, with the same sentiments, with the same invocation (apostrophe) and in part with the same words.

After what I have written you, my dear friend, there would be no need to add more in order to show you even more [clearly] that the Italian sacred work of Serafino della Salandra has been entirely transfused into John Milton's English poem. Open the two books and then tell me whether the two poets are not in agreement as regards the story, the characters, the episodes, the vicissitudes and so forth. Many thoughts, some flights of fancy, various sentences have been expressed by both of them in the same way and resemble one another like two drops of water; and, what is more singular, Rolli has hit upon some of the identical words which Salandra had used before him.

I had intended to give you at the end of this letter a faithful transcript of those of Milton's lines which agree with Salandra's, but then I became aware that, in order to be exact, I should have been obliged to copy out the entire work of the English poet with an ample margin, and I decided to relinquish the idea because I have neither the patience nor the time.

Having placed side by side all that is common to the English poem and to the Italian one which gave it birth, it would be my duty to speak also of its poetic merit and of the life of its author, both of them little known. But I promise you to do this at my ease in a second letter if I succeed in finding information about Salandra's life, [and] while examining the defects and the beauties of his tragedy I will then perhaps publish its entire text beside that of Milton. Thus one will be in a better position to compare the two, thought for thought, line for line, word for word.

Meanwhile I must tell you that the tragedy of *Adamo Caduto* is of the mint (*conio*) of those old *sacred works* concerning which Father Bianchi and Saverio Mattei discourse, and which were recited in Calabria, as Voltaire wrote to the French Academy on the 25th August, 1776, long before either France herself or England had a theatre.

As with Calderon, Shakespeare and Schiller, the unities of time and place are not respected here, but we find scattered thoughts and lines which are no disgrace to the poetry of the first and last years of the seventeenth century; indeed some

of the choruses, various passages of certain soliloquies, reach the level of the good poetry of to-day.

I have hastened to print this letter solely in order to announce a discovery which strikes me as important; and in my haste I have written it in that style and with such words as seemed to me sufficient to make my meaning clear.

I make this declaration because, while accusing Milton of plagiarism I am justly afraid that others may blame me for lack of elegance and literary *lèse majesté*.

Since my name is unknown in the republic of letters there may be some who, actuated by an intelligible scepticism, will ask you for *your proofs* in my place (in vece mia) and will summon you, as lawyers say, to exhibit your *title*. Very well, promise all of them that the tragedy of *Adamo Caduto* is to be seen (ostensibile).

I do not know whether there are many copies of it in the Kingdom or outside it, and more particularly in the libraries of the Mendicant Friars: but I certainly possess one which I can allow to be read by anybody whenever he so desires it. The glory which springs from this discovery belongs to our Italy: I made it by chance, but since it is not a production which I publish (produzione che pubblico) I do not claim any merit therein and merely congratulate myself and my country and you, my learned friend, who with your talents are its ornament.

For the rest, I must finish this letter with a protest. While vindicating Italian claims I have no intention of detracting from the renown of any eminent foreigner. Descartes, Locke, Leibnitz, Newton, Galilei, Franklin, Redi will always remain men of highest standing, despite the plagiarisms of which Dates accuses them. Milton will always live as a great man in the eyes of posterity for having been the first man to enrich his country with a perfect epic, masterpiece of the human intellect in the domain of poetry. *Paradise Lost*, the delight and pride of the English, has, like the *Iliad* and the *Æneid*, those original beauties which belong to all people and to all times. I shall therefore always admire Milton and I have every regard for his country, rich in illustrious men at all epochs, to mention only Newton who discovered for us the *secrets of*

the Omnipotence, and for whose equal all the nations of the earth will search in vain.

So much for Zicari, a perusal of whose article will show that he has proved *Paradise Lost* to be what I have already called a transfusion, in general and in particular, of the *Adamo Caduto*.

I will now place side by side a few extracts from the original texts of *Salandra* and of *Milton*, although they have already been noticed; no harm in a little repetition!

SALANDRA.

Ravviso gli animal, ch'a schiera a schiera
Già fanno humil e *reverente* inclino . . .
Raveggio il bel serpente *avvolto* in giri,
 . . . O sei bello
Con tanta varistà che certo sembri
Altro stellato ciel, *smaltata* terra.
O che sento, *tu parli*?

MILTON:

She minded not, as used
To such disport before her through the field
From every beast, more *duteous* at her call . . .
Curled many a wanton *wreath* in sight of Eve.
His turret crest and sleek *enamelled* neck . . .
What may this mean? Language of man *pronounced*
By tongue of brute?

SALANDRA

. . . Facciam
Acciò, che l'huom divenga
A Dio nemico . . .

MILTON:

Seduce them to our party, that their God
May prove their foe . . .

SALANDRA:

Qual agitato legno d'Austro, e Noto,
Instabile incostante, non hai pace,
Tu vivi pur . . .

MILTON (*an ominous parallelism*):

... High winds worse within
Began to rise ... and shook sore
Their inward state of mind, calm region once
And full of peace, now tossed and turbulent.

SALANDRA:

A chi basterà l'anima di voi?
... certo che quest'affare
A la mia man s'aspetta.

MILTON:

... Whom shall we find
Sufficient? ... This enterprise
None shall partake with me.

SALANDRA:

... inclino il cielo
Giù ne la terra, e questa al Ciel innalza.

MILTON:

And Earth be changed to Heaven, and Heaven to Earth.

SALANDRA: (*after the Fall of man*):

vacillò la terra (1), gemè (2), e pianse (3), rumoreggiano i tuoni
(4), accompagnati da grandini (5), e dense nevi (6).

MILTON:

Earth trembled from her entrails (1), and nature gave a second
groan (2); sky loured and muttering thunders (4), some sad drops
wept (3), the winds, armed with ice and snow (6) and hail (5).

Six Italian words, out of Salandra's fifteen, rendered into
English.

Who will venture to speak of such things as imitations or
verbal coincidences? 'Translations' is the correct term;
translations which, taken together with all that has gone
before, prove Milton to have studied his Salandra with
assiduity, and to such good purpose that we may well ask
ourselves whether it be an exaggeration to call *Paradise Lost*
one of the most interesting cases of plagiarism in the annals of
literature—and that from a contemporary.

For the rest, Zicari could have strengthened his position
immeasurably had he found access to the Milton manuscripts
preserved at Cambridge which are mentioned on page 170
of *Old Calabria* and the text of which can be read in Johnson's

Life of the poet. I am not going into this matter beyond saying that from these drafts it is clear that Milton's first project was to write not an epic but a sacred tragedy on the lines of *Adamo Caduto*. Here the 'Satan' of *Paradise Lost* is still Salandra's 'Lucifer'; here are also a chorus and a number of mutes who were eliminated from the subsequent epic but who form part of the Italian text; and here we are told that 'at last appears Mercy, comforts him, promises the Messiah, etc.', which is precisely what Salandra's Mercy (*Misericordia*) does in the same place.

PS.—There has just reached me a pleasingly written pamphlet of 26 pages dealing with this subject (Sergio de Pilato: *UN ISPIRATORE ITALIANO DEL PARADISO PERDUTO DI MILTON*—P. SERAFINO DELLA SALANDRA. Edizioni Marchesielli, Potenza, 1934).

The author tells us that the only other work by Salandra, entitled *Venere Pudica e martire della città (sic) di Locri adesso Gerace*, is not to be traced, and that Salandra's *Adamo Caduto* contrasts favourably with other sacred tragedies of that period by reason of its noble and austere purpose; that the first edition of Zicari's article appeared in 1832, while the project of writing that 'second letter' may well have been cut short by his death in 1846 (see footnote to p. 161 of *Old Calabria*).

He mentions also the fact that Allodoli, in his *Milton e l'Italia* (Prato, 1907) has concerned himself with this question.

SHAKESPEARE AND TOM THUMB

JACK LINDSAY

SHAKESPEARE invented the small-sized Fairy; and did it with such success that we feel a shock on finding out what he contrived. The tiny Fairy, which we take for granted as an example of folk-fancy at its liveliest, was the creation of a single poet. Till Shakespeare got to work, the Fairy was described and seen as a creature of normal human dimensions, though maybe a trifle shorter; the fragile fluttering denizens of the *Midsummer Night's Dream* were of his only begetting. But the imagery of that dream, abetted by the bravura of Mercutio's account of Queen Mab, was so delightedly received that in a generation people were forgetting Fairies had ever been big enough to knock them down; and nowadays we have ceased to question the matter. Nobody objected to the fake fairy-photos that took in Conan Doyle, on the grounds that the photos, if genuine, must have recorded something in Shakespeare's mind, not in the English landscape.¹

But here is surely an episode that merits close investigation. On the one hand, Shakespeare's transformation of the fairy-image ought to give us an important insight into his psychic processes; for a poet so soaked in folk-tradition would certainly not have made such a radical change in that tradition unless he had felt a strong compulsion. And on the other hand, there must have been something sympathetic to the change in people's minds, some sort of a predisposition; otherwise such widespread acceptance of the new image would have been impossible. Here, indeed, is a very pretty problem, which raises basic issues concerning the creative process, its personal

¹ Till Shakespeare, 'English fairies were of the same type as in those countries where his influence has been less felt . . . the size of an ordinary human being' with 'all the characteristics of a human person', M. A. Murray, *The God of the Witches*, 41.

roots, and social correlations. In fact, here seems one of the very few chances we get of prying right inside Shakespeare's mind. And yet hardly a glance has been spared for the matter.

The failure to recognize the cleavage between the new tiny winged things and the old heavy-footed folk-fairy is made all the stranger when we notice how the two types exist side by side in Shakespeare's work. Thus, we find humans mistaken for fairies: Imogen in *Cymbeline*, and Marina in *Pericles*. And the old complex of fairy-characteristics continually asserts itself. Fairies mislead; pinch people ferociously for unchastity and dirt; are connected with witches; bring changelings; act as night-tempters and familiars, and dance on the green. All these actions are those of the old folk-fairies, who are imagined as a dangerous community of full-sized spirits inhabiting the space between midnight and cock-crow and needing to be placated with food-gifts and correct behaviour.¹

Much of this complex is carried over into *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. That play depicts a commonwealth of elves and fairies, with rulers, who come at the accustomed times, who sing at any pretext and dance through the play, who have a changeling and carry a mortal off into their world, and whose advent scares mortals to bed. But when we look closer we see that the play rightly claims them to be 'spirits of another sort' (III, ii, 388). All that is 'homely or substantial or dangerous' has been excised, and only the rulers have perilous potencies and quick tempers. The fairies in general have ceased to be an active and powerful community; they merely attend the rulers and appear as minute charming garden-creatures, lost among moonbeams and butterfly-tinsels.²

To get the full contrast of the folk-fairy we cannot do better than look at *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. There, the revellers

¹ Typical of sixteenth century attitudes Joan Tyrrye in 1555 met a Fairy as a man 'having a white rod in his hand, and she came to him, thinking to make an acquaintance of him,' G. L. Kittredge, *Witchcraft in Old and New Eng* (1929), 254.

² M. W. Latham, *The Elizabethan Fairies* (Columbia, 1930) 1771-80; he thoroughly examines the subject. Scholars like E. K. Chambers or Sidgwick (*Sources and Analogues of M.N.D.*, 1908) have failed to grasp the decisive nature of S.'s changes. J. Ritson ('Dissertation', *Fairy Tales*, 1831) saw that British Fairies had become quite unlike any others, but missed S.'s key-part.

who teach Falstaff his lesson are disguised as Fairies, and nobody feels any incongruity. Falstaff does not think Anne Page too buxom for a fairy-lass or Pistol too bulky for a hobgoblin.¹ This is the normal attitude of the day. in 1613 John and Alice West were arrested for impersonating the King and Queen of Faery, and obtaining money from their dupe for rites of sacrifice. 'They brought him into a vault, where they showed him two like the king and queen of fayries, and by them elves and goblins, and in the same place an infinite company of bags, and upon them written, This is for Thomas Moore, This is for his wife.' The lawyer's clerk in Ben Jonson's *Alchemist* thought an interview with the Fairy Queen quite a possible event; and as substantial a wench as Doll Common was a convincing guiser of the part. In Scotland, less touched by Shakespeare's influence than England, the folk-tradition continued with full strength and for long the witches hobnobbed with fairies of human lengths. Thus, Isobel Gowdie confessed in 1667 that 'the king of Fearrie is a braw man, well favoured and broad faced', and Robert Kirk, in his *Secret Commonwealth* (1691), knew Fairies only as a 'Multitude of Wight's, like furious hardie Men'.²

A century after Shakespeare another great writer revealed, at the culminating point of his work, an obsession with the fantasy of the Small Creature. Swift, in *Gulliver's Travels*. Here there is no question of someone transforming a folk-image. What happens is the carrying of a folk-theme on to a higher level of fantasy, where complicated intellectual and emotional significances are derived from its play. But the analogy is relevant; it gives us the clue both to the psychic meaning of Shakespeare's fairy-changes and to the sources he is drawing on to effect these changes. Both Shakespeare and Swift are using in new ways the folk-theme of Tom Thumb.

The image of a tiny mischievous being, who gets into troubles and passes through ordeals, is extremely ancient and widespread. Tom Thumb's story is typical of the whole series,

¹ In Fletcher's *The Pilgrim* two girls are taken for fairies, Fairies are full-sized in Lyly's *Endimion*, etc. Dekker's *The Whore of Babylon* has the Fairy Queen, her Fairy Peers, etc., representing Elizabeth and so on.

² Hazlett, *Fairy Tales Illus. S.* (1875) 222 ff.; Pitcairn, *Gen. App.* 604, Kirk, 27. See in general Murray and Latham.

which can be traced with special strength over Northern Europe.¹

In the tale-type, a childless couple wish for a child, no matter how small, and get one the size of a thumb. Sometimes a mantic or fairy visitor grants the wish in return for hospitality. The thumb-child carries out various feats and meets mishaps. He drives a wagon by sitting in the horse's ear; he lets himself be sold and then escapes; he is carried up a chimney by the steam of food; he teases a tailor's wife; he helps thieves to rob a treasure-house and betrays them by his cries; he is swallowed by a cow and recovered when the cow is slaughtered; he persuades a fox which has eaten him to go after the chickens in his father's coop (or the food in the pantry) and then cries out till he is rescued.

The English version first appeared, as far as we can see, in print in the prose of Richard Johnson; but his lively preface emphasizes the antiquity of the material:—

My merry muse begets no tales of Guy of Warwick, nor of bold Sir Bevis of Hampton; nor will I trouble my pen with the pleasant glee of Robin Hood, Little John, the Friar, and his Marian; nor will I call to mind the lusty Pindar of Wakefield, nor those bold yeomen of the north Adam Bell, Clym of the Clough, nor William of Cloudeslie, those ancient archers of all England, nor shall my story be made of the mad merry pranks of Tom of Bethlem, Tom Lincoln, or Tom a Lin, the devil's supposed Bastard; nor yet of Gargantua, that monster of men; but of an older Tom, a Tom of more antiquity, a Tom of strange making, I mean Little Tom of Wales, no bigger than a Miller's thumb, and therefore, for his small stature, surnamed Tom Thumb.

And he expressly relates the immemorial tale with the moments of high folk-festival.

The ancient tales of Tom Thumb in the olden time, have been the only revivers of drowsy age at midnight; old and young have with his tales chimed matins till the cocks crow in the morning; bachelors and maids with his tales have compassed the Christmas fire-block, till the curfew-bell rings candle out; the old shepherd and the young

¹ Aarne-Thompson, *Types of Folk-Tale* (Helsinki, 1928) No. 700; Bolte-Polivka, *Anmerkungen zu den Kinder-und Haus-Märchen* (1913-8); 389 (nos. 37, 45); A. N. Afanasiev, *Narod. Russk. Skazki* (1860-3) v. no 21; J. G. Hahn, *Griech. u. alban. Märchen* (1864) nos. 55, 99, etc.

ploughboy, after their day's labour, have carolled out a tale of Tom Thumb to make them merry with, and who but little Tom hath made long nights seem short, and heavy toils easy?

Therefore, gentle reader, considering that old modest mirth is turned naked out of doors, while nimble wit is in the great hall on a soft cushion giving dry bobs, for which cause I will, if I can, new clothe him in his former livery, and bring him again into the chimney corner, where now you must imagine me to sit by a good fire, amongst a company of good fellows, over a well-spiced wassail-bowl of Christmas ale, telling of these merry tales. .¹

In 1584, Scot, in his *Discovery of Witchcraft*, had cited Tom Thumb among spirits and goblins 'who make people afraid of their own shadows'. And in 1592 Nash, in *Pierce Penlesse His Supplication to the Deuill*, complains that if 'euerie grosse brainde idiot' decides to 'set foorth a pamphlet of the praise of pudding pricks, or write a *Treatise of Tom Thumme*, or the exploits of Vntrusse, it is bought up thicke and threefolde, when better things lye dead'. So it is likely that there were printed accounts before Johnson.

Ballad-versions followed quick upon the prose tales. In 1630 came out *Tom Thumbe, his Life and Death: Wherein is declared many Marvailous Acts of Manhood, full of wonder, and strange merriments; Which litle Knight liued in King Arthurs time, and (was) famous in the Court of Great Brittain*. And later in the century an expanded verse-account appeared.

Here then is the folk-image of the tiny creature, though in a different setting from that used by Shakespeare and Swift. The adventures of the English mannikin follow the general pattern of the tale-type, with emphasis on the misadventures in connection with food. Tom Thumb is continually being swallowed down and vomited out; and his most popular mishap was his getting mixed-up with a pudding from which in due time he managed to burst forth. What is however unique is his linking with an heroic romance cycle, that of Arthur. It is Merlin who grants the wish of the childless couple, and it is to Arthur's court that the mannikin repairs. A further singular detail is the association he gets in the

¹ *The History of Tom Thumb the Little, for his small stature surnamed King Arthur's Dwarf: whose life and adventures containe many strange and wonderful accidents, published for the delight of merry Time-spenders, 1621.*

English tales with Fairyland. When he dies he is taken away (like Arthur himself) into the fairy otherworld:

And vp into the Fayry Land his ghost did fading goe.
Whereas the Fayry Queene recei'd, with heauy mourning cheere
The body of this valiant knight, whom she esteem'd so deare.
For with her dancing Nymphes in greene, she fetch him from his bed,
With musicke and sweet melody, as soone as life is fled.

In the expanded version he dies into fairyland, but undergoes a resurrection after two hundred years. He returns to the Court where Arthur still reigns, and resumes his adventures.¹

And in his *Nymphidia*, published in 1627, Drayton—a Warwickshire man like Shakespeare—develops the imagery of the tiny fairy-world and introduces Tom Thumb as the page of Pigwiggen, the fairy knight who falls in love with Queen Mab.² In the next year appeared the account of *Robin Goodfellow, his Mad Pranks and Merry Jests*, where Tom Thumb is the musician of Oberon. 'Hee had an excellent bag-pipe made of a wrens quill, and the skin of a Greenland louse.' There we meet the precise method of fantasy-reductions which Shakespeare used in describing his tiny fairy-world. The ballads show the same tricks:

His hat made of an oaken leafe, his shirt a spiders web,
Both light and soft for those his limbes that were so smally bred;
His hose and doublet thistle downe, togeather weau'd full fine;
His stockins of an apple greene, made of the outward rine;
His garters were two little haire. pull'd from his mothers eye.
His bootes and shoes a mouses skin, there tand most curiously . . .

There can be no doubt that here is an ancient folk-motive, which Shakespeare transferred from Tom Thumb to the

¹ In *Thomas Redivivus* (1729) he returns into King Edgar's reign. Cf. Hearne (May 21, 1734). 'I begun to think that [Andrew] Borde was the author of the *History of Tom Thumb*. It relates to some dwarf, and he is reported to have been King Edgar's dwarf, but we want history for it . . .'; (May 22) 'What makes me think that Tom Thumb is founded upon history is the method of those times of turning true history into little pretty stories, of which we have many instances, one of which is "Guy of Warwick";' *Rel. Hearn*. (ed. Bliss) 822.

² The fairy-affiliation appears in the old ballad, *The Devil and the Scold*. 'Tom Thumb is not my subject, whom faries oft did aide. Nor that mad spirit Robin, That plagues both wife and maid.'

Fairies.¹ The fact that Tom had been related to the fairy-world in the folk-tradition made this transference easier than it would otherwise have been; but we cannot find the explanation of Shakespeare's impulse there, for in the folk-tradition the Fairies who take him off are no more of his stature than are the Knights of Arthur's Court where he sojourns.

Does it help us to look at the original elements of the theme? The tale of ordeals—of deaths-by-swallowing and rebirths-by-emergence—certainly derives in the last resort from initiation-ritual and shamanist experience. The author of the expanded ballad either intuited something of this ultimate meaning or drew on ancient sources which made the resurrection-theme explicit.

There is a certain quidlibet audendi belonging to poets, or a man would think, that, when Robin Whood (or anybody else) is once dead, and buried, and a good hard stone laid upon his belly, nothing would fetch him to life again but a miracle. And yet, here, you see, is Robin Whood revived! Why, yes Tom Thumb lived in the days of King Arthur, and revived in the days of King Edgar.²

Tom Thumb at this point merges with Robin Hood or any other of the folk-figures such as John Barley-corn who die and revive, expressing the recurrent life of nature, the sacrificial rite of renewal, the emotional experience of rebirth in initiation.

But though in Shakespeare's days there was still a potent element of the primitive meanings attached to these folk-emblems, we must look into his psychic processes for the clue of transformation. If we explore the unconscious force of the Tom Thumb image, we find at once that there is revealed a particularly strong and simple identification of child and

¹ The same trick, turned the other way round, appears in the complex (ult. ritual) surrounding the Robin and the Wren, where the tiny bird is imagined in gigantesque terms: e.g. The Cutty Wren as the Great Bird of sacrifice, capable of feeding all the people; or Robin leaving his matchstick legs for pillars to bridges (*Songs from D. Herd's MSS*, Hecht (1904) 197-9).

² Gutch, *Robin Hood*, ii, 404; W. C. Hazlett, *Remains of Early Pop. Poetry* (1866) ii, 174. A woodcut at the end of the 1630 ballad shows the Funeral of T.T.

phallus. The nursery-rhyme derived from the theme brings this point out clearly.

I had a little husband, no bigger than my thumb,
I put him in a pintpot, and there I bid him drum.
I bought a little horse, that galloped up and down;
I bridled him, and saddled him, and sent him out of town
I gave him some garters, to garter up his hose,
And a little handkerchief to wipe his pretty nose.¹

The magical effect of Tom is thus that he suggests the child as an adult, the child with the adult's potences who is yet freed from the ordinary responsibilities of the adult world. He is pure freedom and potency, but the dream-image comes up against reality in the continual fall of the creature of pure energy into disaster and death. The expanded ballad brings out the direct sexual aspect by ascribing Tom Thumb's downfall at the Court to an effort to creep on the Queen and ravish her.

How far does all this help us to clarify Shakespeare's use of Tom? A great deal, I think. There is no doubt that for him the folk-fairies with their pinching attacks represented the nemesis of sexual experience, both the accusing moral law and the horrors of venereal disease.² In his minikin fairies he overcomes this imagery of fear; he turns it into an imagery of sweetness and release. The creative process revealed in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was thus not something wilful or accidental; it was a necessary part of Shakespeare's conquest of experience. In that dream picture he defeated a profound element of fear and cleared the ground for his fuller advance into the acceptance and questioning of life.

This re-creation of the fairy-world, in which a thing of fear becomes a thing of sweetness and liberation, exposes the tremendous struggle going on at the core of his concepts of sex. From one angle it announces a deep mother-attachment,

¹ Halliwell, *Nursery Rhymes* (6th ed.) 240, in Sussex, Cheshire, etc the thumb was called Tom Thumbkin. J. C. Flugel, *Intro to P.A.* (1932) 57, cites this rhyme as a classic example of genital and coital imagery.

² I do not need to labour this point, as it is fully established by E. A. Armstrong's examination of S.'s image-clusters in *Shakespeare's Imagination* (1916); but also see Latham (esp. 113-137) for the Fairies and Sexual Punishments.

a return to the infantile level: the phallus-baby in pure and satisfying contact with the source of life and delight. But from another angle it announces a decisive moment of break from the mother-symbol, an acceptance of experience without the distortions and pangs of fear.

And so it is that when at the end of his life as poet Shakespeare quests round for images to express his creative processes, he comes again on the image of the small fice fairy-spirit. Ariel is Puck caught up from the sexual night and made the emblem of poetic relation, the emissary of the realizing imagination, Prospero.

It becomes clear then how central in Shakespeare's art was this transformation of the fairy-image. In it we witness his return into the infantile levels in order to break the fear-en enslavement to the mother which the traditional fairy-image expressed and perpetuated. The incest-fantasy is robbed of its sting and accepted in order that it may be set aside, may be made into the basis for a new lyrical acceptance of life.¹ And that is why people in general, in the throes of a struggle away from the old fears, welcomed this achievement and made it a part of the national culture; Shakespeare's fairies are an important part of the defeat of the old witch-darkness of the medieval world, an emblem of the spiritual movement forward into decisive new levels, new centres of organization. That Puck should then reappear as Ariel in his final summary and symbolic survey of his work in *The Tempest* was inevitable. The freed energies of love, which had uttered their joy and pang in his plays, now showed themselves as the pure creative energies; and the magician could lay down his wand. The maze of the lovers was the same whether it lay in an enchanted wood of romance or on the difficult isle of mystery-ordeal; but the poet was viewing it from a different level. In the hush of his music he heard the entire truth.

¹ That is, without *A Midsummer Night's Dream* there could have been no *Hamlet* exploring the unconscious tensions, no *Antony and Cleopatra* defining 'new heaven, new earth' for love

POETRY
GREEK THEATRE

by NORMAN McCAIG

Where they danced is the blind eye of a statue
That rejects the instant, and the blue air is filled
(That has been rinsed down to its naked virtue
By so many years) with repetition. The flute
Still dawdles in the space it has created
And the hand is clenched over the cloak's fold.

No more than a grasshopper that fills the air with fading
And harvest-coloured combs, O less than the splayed
Derisive lizard that sits on the stone hiding
In the parenthesis of light, can I avoid
This day a hundred years hence, who in my greedy
Heart hide my continuation and my end.

Haunting old passion with a bankrupt fury
I hear in a book's grave that is no grave—
O gold of ancient mouths, the bees that carry
The treasures of your lips to my draughty hive
Tire with no flight of fields nor endless summers;
Where is the death Time struggled to conceive?

End and continuation grow together;
And now King Oedipus walks Sophocles
Across my trembling moment, and each, being either,
Altered by me, assume me in themselves
So that, beyond the shut eye of the future
This day already breaks on remembered skies.

NIGHT OF CLEAR MOON

by NORMAN McCAIG

Fishes that flit in the candelabra water
Mellifluously weaving light and shade together
With their lackadaisical impulsive shuttles
Swarm no more lightly nor move more glibly than
The gules and oil-drops of the startling moon
On the consent and lapsing of these cold waves
Where a dry leaf stiffly rattles
Its tattered acclamation to spent loves,
Riding like Rosinante through a nightmare Spain.

And in the air ruins of light foregather
To nod down history to a host of weathers
And make gods tumbledown like their cathedrals,
Stiffly enduring in broken chapters all
The testament of their praise failed to reveal;
Sadness like snow like angels nests within
Walls where a flower of candles
Was a resurrection of the murdered sun
And bore his flesh for all the air to feel.

I watch the scandalous water pour in pity
Through the long church of darkness with marks of beauty
Stained on its paleness; it wavers over and over,
With tell-tale repetitions, all it had drowned;
It sings repentance. And I who have once been blind
And beggared in the dotage of the monster sun
Sing of my sin, discover
Ruins within me open to the rain
Where angels lodge bare on the mourning ground.

POETRY

POEM

by BARBARA NORMAN

Tiny below the loins of light,
the shadow of his crouching form enormous,
a dwarf in rage, a twisted rose, he fell,
beating that Titan Earth he could not span,
crippled with a black bitterness,
craving the vines of Hell—
weirdly his face set moonward, bleak,
as a blade dipped to the hilt in light,
more rapt, more wildly beautiful than any man.

Beating and beaten-on,
crying down angel-vengeance
and Cain to shame for him,
chained to a hate that was not hate
but a grief to great to bear, his last
mad malediction lonely and great as prayer.

He swooned, and dreamed
down to the root of the torment,
dreamed that the World had died
that Cain might be forgiven.
And from his fettered breast
there burst not blood, but music,
a terror-throated litany of men,
a body-riven cry, a Legion pain,
a cry for the sky to shrive
where none were shriven—

And One who heard his cry
came to his side in answer,
his face so stormed by light
that none should see it—
and turned to him this face
with eyes of the last darkness,
and both in the darkness wept
and both embraced, the twain
in their grief for Legion, crying for Cain.

POETRY

And when at last he rose,
the Earth saw a strange new angel,
a bright Satan freed from Hell,
his upward-crying arms,
 nor wings, nor flames,
 nor branches were they,
 but ascendant and alight.

BLACK SAIL, WHITE SAIL

by NORMAN McCaig

Will my tomorrow come? Boat, bitter to me,
You crush me as those waves
Under your sidling savage forefoot, with a promise.
You slant across me—I am your burden, not this
Message whose wing limps under the bare sky
Dragging the two derivatives of love's
Still unexpounded question, the yes or no.
You carry me to myself—what I shall be
Lies, nudged by the waves,
Bound in your singing boards. My future comes
Like a physician to justify the claims
I make on the past; for with the past I'll die
Or carry my death through a new host of lives.
Boat without memory, remember you skirt now
A dark and drowning stone
Where your split planks would scatter a world away,
For your to-morrow must bring death and me
Together in this narrow harbour, or must carry
An ancient agony into Avalon.
What do I pray for, who lie hurt by the world's
Beauty and savagery? What
Will bring them to their full ripeness within me—
With my defeat in my hands, of their hurt to die,
Or to drag with me the conquered past, abroad
To the foreign future, for ever to contemplate
The wonder diminished, the terror driven from the woods?

AS IN AMBER

by WILLIAM JUSTEMA

Love said to me
'this is my mother,'
and to Death
'this is my lover'.

'You never told me
about her!' I cried.
'You never asked me,'
she replied.

'And where will we
three live, my son?'
'Not with us! Not with us!
I married just one.'

But now we are four
I no longer try
to escape the amber
of my son's eye.

While mother and daughter
smile over our heads
at something they see
beyond living and dead.

The boy sees it too
but all that I see
is a man as in amber
looking at me.

FARMERS' BOYS

RAYNER S. UNWIN

IT is not easy to write poetry about one's everyday occupations, and until comparatively recently such subjects were not considered fitting for the Muse. Rural scenes, especially before the Romantic Revival, though frequently described, are treated with an aloofness which precludes any direct feeling for the spirit of Nature. The country labourer is her closest witness, yet artisan poets are a rarity. Burns and Clare are the most outstanding examples and have been studied with the attention they deserve. The names of two others, Stephen Duck and Robert Bloomfield, are largely forgotten in this century; their work is for the most part bad, but each wrote one cyclical poem, descriptive of the seasonal labours of the farm worker which is worth disinterring from the past. Their difficulties seemed insuperable, they were barely literate, yet unread, and overworked, they produced poetry distinguished not only for its vivid of-the-earth earthiness, but for a calm tranquillity that captures the spirit of the countryside more completely than the pastoral elegancies of their more prosperous brothers.

Pastoral poetry often evokes a rather sickly vision of Colin Clout, nymphs, shepherds and insipid bacchanals that bear as little resemblance to rural life as chalk does to cheese. But Spenser wasn't concerned with real peasants, nor Milton with how they lived; no poet considered writing verses in praise of farmers or panegyrics on muckheaps. John Taylor, the seventeenth century 'Water Poet' was one of the first to write exclusively about the things he did daily; he was a waterman on the Thames, a rumbustious fellow who wrote fluent, careless verses, spared nobody (except possible patrons), and drank deep. 'We went into the house of one John Pinners,' he relates in a typical poem:

'A man that lives amongst a crew of sinners,
And there eight several sorts of ale we had
All able to make one stark drunk, or mad.'

Almost a century passed before another artisan poet appeared; this was Stephen Duck, a contemporary of James Thompson whose poem, 'The Seasons,' profoundly influenced many succeeding generations of 'naturalistic' poets.

Sentimentalizing is regarded with horror by all Englishmen. Nowadays one would heartily suspect the man who addressed you as 'Brother' and discoursed on the wind on the heath; yet inwardly we have an affection for things that we outwardly ignore, our countryside being chief among them. We deceive nobody by this reserve; the foreigner knows us well as the sentimental Englishman, the man who will dismount if his horse is tired, not whip it into renewed activity, but still we believe ourselves to be hardheaded and devoid of all effeminacy. When reading poetry Shakespeare and Browning are to be preferred, they were men pre-eminently; but to be surprised in Arcady, surrounded by fauns and Dryads is undignified and embarrassing. Our pastoral poets in consequence are not numerous nor self-confident, sometimes, indeed, they are distinguished by a querulous lack of assurance. The poets of the Romantic movement brought a freshness and animation to the interpretation of Nature, a vision of glory and delight in all the uncorrupted beauties of landscape and living things. They felt instantly for the pulse of Nature, and, discontented with an objective description, referred their emotional experiences directly to the reader. Their method of communication transcended all others but the Romantic poets were thinking beyond Nature and using her as a means to achieve an end ('Passing through Nature to Eternity') the wholly rustic poets found an end in Nature herself.

It is now over two hundred years since the first famous attempt on the part of a farm labourer to submit his poetry to the judgment of the world; during that time the name of Stephen Duck has faded into complete obscurity. Duck was a countryman of Wiltshire, 'Engaged,' says his contemporary biographer, Spence, 'in the several lowest employments of a country life.' His nominal education was soon forgotten, but in about 1724 he began to be troubled by his lack of arithmetic. By working overtime he managed to save sufficient money to

buy three elementary mathematical textbooks. This was the foundation of his learning which, six years later, was to be shown in a substantial volume of poems. Duck first discovered poetry from a few books in the possession of a friend. They read and discussed them together, 'both equally inclin'd to learn, both struggling with a little knowledge.' Their library was curiously mixed, ranging from Ovid and Seneca to 'Tom Brown' and 'The London Spy'. To this haphazard collection was later added *Paradise Lost*, a book at once thrilling and difficult to understand. 'Stephen read it over twice or thrice with a dictionary before he could understand the language of it thoroughly; indeed, it seems plain to me that he got English just as we get Latin.' Duck's diligence was astonishing; the farmer under whom he worked was a martinet, and labourers in the eighteenth century were not taken very seriously when they wished to improve themselves. Every spare minute he could obtain Duck spent at his books and soon was producing poems which, after he had read them to his own satisfaction, he burnt. How much interesting work has been lost this way: Christopher Smart, whose scribbled poems were seldom retrieved from the asylum; John Clare, who wrote verses on scraps of paper which he would stuff in a hole in the wall and his mother would use for lighting the fire; even Duck's early efforts, are sad losses. However secretly he burnt his poems, Duck could not conceal for long the fact that he was a poet. A gentleman from Oxford had caught the scent and followed it to Wiltshire. He was charmed with the novelty of his discovery and, on receipt of certain highly flattering verses, decided to patronize Duck. Stephen was shrewd enough to realize that 'gentlemen indeed might like my poems, because they were made by a poor fellow in a barn, but I know as well as anybody that they are not really good in themselves'—an astonishing example of modesty. He was nevertheless quite willing to receive patronage and soon became a fashionable toy in Georgian London and a beneficiary of the Queen. He was ordained, published his poems, was lionized, and twenty years later drowned himself in the Thames.

Duck, as we have seen, was a poet aware of his limitations. Success did not turn his head but it neither made him happy

nor a better poet. On a tour he made at the height of his success he prophesied:

'Thus shall Tradition keep my Fame alive;
The Bard may die, the Thresher still survive.'

Certainly it is Duck the Thresher one remembers and Duck the writer of complimentary verses whom one likes to forget. The finest of his poems was composed before fashion had caught up with him and describes, as its title implies, the Thresher's Labour. Had he kept to such subjects and talked as colloquially and intimately as he does here he might have achieved great things. The opportunity was magnificent; but, alas, he was guided into the glib superficialities of the times, the wrong road in poetical judgment was taken, and Duck, who could, in Clare's words, say.—

'I found the poems in the fields
And only wrote them down.'

was gradually metamorphosed into an Horatian coupleteer.

Duck begins his 'Thresher's Labour' in the winter season after the harvest has been gathered in. The threshing floor is prepared, an aspect of farm life that labourers nowadays are happily spared, and the farmer, a surly taskmaster, is talking to his men.

'So dry the Corn was carry'd from the Field,
So easily 'twill thresh, so well 'twill yield;
Sure large Day's-Works I well may hope for now:
Come, strip, and try; let's see what you can do.'

Soon Stephen and his companions are hard at work, and hand threshing is a physically arduous task.

'In briny Streams our Sweat descends apace,
Drops from our Locks, or trickles down our Face.
No Intermission in our Work we know;
The noisy Threshal must for ever go.
Their Master absent, others safely play;
The sleeping Threshal does itself betray.'

Week after week the monotonous task continues and, the corn finished, there comes an added discomfort:

'When sooty Pease we thresh, you scarce can know
Our native Colour, as from Work we go:
The Sweat, the Dust, and suffocating Smoke,
Make us so much like Ethiopians look,
We scare our Wives, when Ev'ning brings us home;
And frighted Infants think the Bugbear come.'

These winter occupations over, the prospect of summer hay-making seems delightful, and the first few hours in the fields are sportive and gay; but the heat of the sun and the exertion of hard work exhausts them. At noon they seek the shade to eat their food, but—

'Down our parch'd Throats we scarce the Bread can get;
And, quite o'erspent with Toil, but faintly eat.
Nor can the Bottle only answer all;
The Bottle and the Beer are both too small.'

The remainder of the day moves wearily to its close and the labourer returns home 'exhausted; in just such a condition Duck himself must have returned to his arithmetic books. There is little resting time, and the next task is the harvest. Armed with their scythes they are in the fields at sunrise and survey the uncut corn. The farmer, 'Kind Menalcus, Partner of my Soul,' as Duck calls him later, is not so benevolent now. As they reap,

'Behind our Master waits; and if he spies
One charitable Ear, he grudging cries,
"Ye scatter half your Wages o'er the Land."
Then scrapes the Stubble with his greedy Hand.'

He is better pleased when the Corn has at last been reaped and the harvest garnered. He celebrates Harvest Home with a supper to which all are invited. 'Jugs of humming Ale' are generously plied and momentarily the year's labour is forgotten:

'But the next Morning soon reveals the Cheat,
When the same Toils we must again repeat;
To the same Barns must back again return,
To labour there for Room for next Year's Corn.'

So the year comes full circle, simply and less circumstantially than Bloomfield's description. It consists, in fact, only of three operations: threshing, haymaking, and reaping. Both the

scheme and execution of the poem are sturdy and unembellished, and although unpretentious, convincing; for the poet is obviously a master, not only of verse, but of flail and scythe.

Nothing succeeds like success. Duck's rise into the Queen's favour was the subject of much talk. Swift wrote to Gay about him, and Gay wrote to Pope. Their comments were not entirely praise, indeed Swift vented a portion of his spleen on him. Amongst aspiring artisan poets too, there was great excitement and soon the slopes of Parnassus were cluttered with trippers.

'Since Rustick Threshers entertain the Muse,
Why may not Bricklayers too their subject chuse?'

inquired one aspirant after immortality; and not only Bricklayers, but Footmen, Millers, and a Weaver of Spitalfields jostled for fame. The result of this vulgarization of poetry was that some twenty artisans and labourers turned poets and starved, yet, although little good was achieved, the reading public was in some way prepared for the rise of Robert Bloomfield fifty years later. Before leaving Duck, however, it is interesting to note that he is still remembered in his native village of Charlton, in Wiltshire, where a yearly threshers' dinner is held for poor labourers in a field known as Duck's Acre.

* * *

Charles Lamb did not think highly of Robert Bloomfield's work. 'It makes me sick,' was his comment on 'The Farmer's Boy', the first considerable poem and unquestionably the best that Bloomfield wrote. Lamb was unjustly harsh, but his was one of the few voices raised in protest against the wave of adulation that swept the country when, in the year 1800, Bloomfield's work was published. 'I do not think any production can be put in competition with it since the days of Theocritus,' was a typical contemporary comment. Such false praise could do nothing but harm, for Bloomfield never pretended to be anything but a writer of simple, narrative, pastoral poetry; pure description, which would provide a tranquil background to the reader's own meditations. To compare

him with Theocritus immediately ensured him a place on the see-saw of literary reputation that whimsically damns or deifies a poet in succeeding generations. Bloomfield's lowly life and unexpected rise to fame gave him a fashionable interest amongst those who were really more intrigued with the peasant than the poet. A good biographical preface will sell indifferent poems: this is true of both Chatterton and Bloomfield whose collected works make uninspiring reading. But Bloomfield's life was not like the short, emotional explosion of Chatterton. He was a very ordinary little country lad. At the age of twelve his brother described him when he visited London, as 'dressed just as he came from keeping sheep, hogs, etc.—his shoes filled full of stumps in the heels. He, looking about him, slipped up—his nails were unused to a flat pavement. I remember viewing him as he scampered up—how small he was'. Robert was born in 1766, one of six children, to a tailor in Suffolk. His mother schooled him a little but at the age of eleven he went out to work at a nearby farm. He was too small to be a useful labourer, so at fifteen he was sent to join his brother in the shoe-mending trade in London. The conditions under which they lived were primitive. 'In the garret we had two turn-up beds and five of us worked,' recounts Robert's brother; 'As we were all single men, lodgers at a shilling per week each, our beds were coarse and all things far from being clean and snug.' Robert was assigned the duty of reading the newspaper aloud to the workmen. It was in the Poet's Corner of one of these papers that his first poem appeared in print. Soon afterwards he borrowed and read copies of *Paradise Lost* and *The Seasons*. The latter undoubtedly influenced him greatly, indeed 'The Farmer's Boy' is sub-divided in a similar manner. Robert's brother remarked, 'I never heard him give so much praise to any book as to that.' At the age of twenty an apprentice dispute forced him to return home, and in the years that followed the seed, sown in London, germinated in his home fields. He married, lived to see thirteen editions of 'The Farmer's Boy' sold during a period when Keats was a financial failure and, profiting little from his success, died in 1823 in a state of melancholy and weakened mind.

Bloomfield's popularity arose from the very simplicity of

what Charles Lamb condemned as 'his poor mind'. He was not a particularly original thinker; almost every countryman has undergone the same experiences and felt the same emotions as he describes, but few have ever attempted to record them in a permanent form. His was one of the last voices to speak unaware of, and unconcerned with, the march of industrial progress, with the 'dark, Satanic Mills' that obsessed Blake and Cobbett. Bloomfield was therefore seized upon as an uncorrupted pastoral poet in an age preparing to justify itself and prove that 'the rural ditties were not mute'. He might, if he had realized the virtues of simplicity, have been a far greater poet; he might have conveyed the spirit of nature in poetry as Walton and White had in prose. That he failed was because he too slavishly followed literary conventions that he did not properly understand. Literary models are disastrous to primitive poets; Stephen Duck fell into the same errors: Clare by his peculiar temperament and circumstances escaped, and Clare is by far the greatest poet. Nevertheless, 'The Farmer's Boy' is a poem which, despite its easily-detected stumblings, deserves recognition after half a century of increasing obscurity. The progress of the farmer's year in the form of a rural calendar is seen through the eyes of Giles, a busy, carefree boy; 'the fields his study, Nature was his book.' Obviously it is a self-portrait, but Bloomfield, unlike Duck in 'The Thresher's Labour', is at pains to detach himself from his hero. Life for Giles was not so harsh nor so hard-working as it had been fifty years before for Duck. His master, the farmer, is not so exacting, and it is seldom that 'he quits his elbow-chair, his cool brick floor, his pitcher and his ease'. Giles can sleep safely in the summer sun, whilst—

'On airy downs the idling Shepherd lies,
And sees to-morrow in the marbled skies.'

Spring, with which the year opens, is a season of harder work. Giles is harrowing in the fields.

'With smiling brow the ploughman cleaves his way,
Draws his fresh parallels, and, wid'ning still,
Treads slow the heavy dale, or climbs the hill:
Strong on the wing his busy followers play,
Where writhing earth-worms meet the' unwelcome day;

Till all is changed, and hill and level down
 Assume a livery of a sober brown;
 Again disturb'd, when Giles with wearying strides
 From ridge to ridge the ponderous harrow guides;
 His heels deep sinking every step he goes,
 Till dirt adhesive loads his clouted shoes.'

In such descriptions Bloomfield is at his best; perfectly simple and unenigmatic, never using nature, as did poets of greater vision like Wordsworth and Vaughan, as a looking-glass for greater mysteries. Poetry as simple as this is surprisingly difficult to write well, for facts have an awkward habit of falling very flat. 'The Stuffed Owl' is full of examples of verse in which otherwise great poets have over-indulged their taste for facts; now Bloomfield deals exclusively in them and very little in ideas (there is neither fantasy nor philosophy in 'The Farmer's Boy'), so his achievement is considerable. For example, his description of butter-making:

'Slow rolls the churn, its load of clogging cream
 At once forgoes its quality and name:
 From knotty particles first floating wide
 Congealing butter's dash'd from side to side;
 Streams of new milk through flowing coolers stray,
 And snow-white curd abounds, and wholesome whey.'

Throughout the course of the poem there are many short digressions. Some, of a moralizing nature, have no place in the cycle of events. The matter is, doubtless, thoroughly praiseworthy, but Bloomfield is unsuited to any form of didacticism. Other interruptions are more welcome: amongst the trivial details of farming life, the myriad summer insects, the lark in song, and the work in the fields, Bloomfield apostrophizes on life in London:

'Dependent, huge metropolis! where Art
 Her poring thousands stows in breathless rooms,
 Midst pois'nous smokes and steams, and rattling looms.'

a life with which he was all too familiar; or delivers a tirade against the docking of horses' tails:

'A moving mockery, a useless name,
 A living proof of cruelty and shame.'

or explains the only really effective way of scaring rooks.

The seasons pass and Giles performs his various jobs, sets the pigs into the forest for acorns, builds himself a hut, watches the hunt pass by, very much as Bevis would have done, or any other country lad. A deep love for the cycle of natural events leads him to cry out:

'Another Spring! His heart exulting cries,
Another Year.'

and although the poem ends here, the theme can never end. It is as rhythmical and fundamental as the sap in the hedge-rows. Many otherwise sensitive pastoral poets have failed to recognize this recurrent natural force, 'returning as the wheel returns.' But even Thompson, Bloomfield's model, had not been so close and intimate with the land itself. To Bloomfield, and equally to his predecessor, Duck, might be applied Wordsworth's famous lines:

'Love had he found in huts where poor men lie,
His daily teachers had been woods and rills.
The silence that is in the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills.'

THE PEACOCK OF JAVA

by WILLIAM JAY SMITH

I thought of the mariners of Solomon
Who, on one of their long voyages, came
On that rare bird, the peacock
Of Java, which brings, even
To the tree of heaven, heaven.

How struggling upward through the dark
Lianas they beheld the tree,
And in the tree, the fan
That would become a king's embroidery.

How they turned and on the quiet
Water then set sail
For home, the peacock's tail
Committed to the legends of the sea.

PROMENADE

J. T. BROCKWAY

IT is five o'clock and although the sun still looks down fiercely from the sky, the promenade is no longer crowded.

Here in the little open-air café overlooking the sea, most of the chairs are empty and the waiters are going down the rows removing the litter from the chequered tablecloths; plates that only half an hour ago were piled high with huge slices of layer cream cake; cups that towered with the silky, foaming whorls of rainbow ice-cream; glasses that had brimmed over on the cloth with the sparkling white froth of Pilsner beer; all the gay gastronomic frivolity of a Sunday afternoon by the sea.

It is a small café, a humble café, and its clientele would make no claim to be distinguished. Here come the youths from the city offices, with their watered hair and their Sunday ties, their squeaking new brown leather shoes and their girls, smiling and beaming, laughing out loud at every quip and gem of wit with which their ungrammatical gallants seek to keep them entertained. Here comes the shopkeeper with his wife and child on their day off. She, a strange, haughty woman, of majestic build, with florid cheeks, a brow like a Roman matron's and a fine aquiline nose, who, having, despite all the protests, combed her little girl's hair and readjusted her slide, now sits back and stares at the child with a look of concentration and disbelief in her face, as though she is asking herself: Is this really my child? The fruit of my own body? whilst the child lies awkwardly in the huge nest of the cane chair, flushed-cheeked, the tears still glistening on its eyelashes, its eyes greedily following the ice-cream sundaes and the coloured pastries as they whisk by on the metal trays—and the father, having wiped his brow, puts away his handkerchief in his trouser pocket and fidgets in his chair, trying vainly to attract the waiter's eye. Here, half an hour ago, sat a chorus of vociferous virgins round a table filled with

bottles of yellow lemonade. And over there, directly opposite me, was the red-lipped young woman who kept staring in my direction, smiling and nodding her head with a persistence most disconcerting, until I discovered that it was not myself who was the object of her admiration, but her own face, reflected in the plate-glass screen behind my head.

No, we are not a very distinguished company here. And that is why I can't keep my eyes off that woman sitting at the far end of the line of tables, nearest the promenade, her dog at her side, her eyes every now and again running up and down the thinning stream of passers-by as though she is expecting someone. For she *is* distinguished. She doesn't belong here. You have only to remark that tilt of her chin, to catch sight of that white hand with its long pointed fingers hanging so elegantly, so nonchalantly over the arm of her chair, to see that *she* is a lady.

But what can she be doing here among office boys and grocers' wivers? She is waiting for someone who doesn't arrive. She has been waiting for an hour already; and now, she at one end of the row of tables, and I at the other, with a young couple who have nowhere else to go and do not care, in the middle between us, are all who remain behind in the café.

I saw her arrive. She chose her seat deliberately. At first I thought it was shyness, but now I see that it was in order to keep a better look-out along the promenade. When she sat down, she ordered coffee and cake and when it arrived she pushed the cup aside, pulled the plate towards her and began to break the cake up into little pieces and feed it to her dog. She is very fond of the dog; he is her closest friend. For she smiles at him, pats his head and talks to him as he eats the creamy cake out of her delicate white hand, so that she forgets all about her coffee growing cold on the table. But he is no pet dog, no squeaking, trick-performing, boudoir dog, but a real dog, a man of a dog, with a flowing white coat and a great fan of a tail. And his heart is given to her as hers is given to him.

As she sits there I notice two things about her: that she is very beautiful; and that she is unhappy. She is no longer

young and her cheeks with their rather high, prominent cheek bones have deep hollows. But those hollows, with their wonderful shadows, add to the subtle charm of the face's mystery. Her dark hair is greying here and there where I can see it, but what I can see of it—for it is partly concealed by a wide-brimmed hat of shiny, stiff black straw and on the crown she has set two enormous imitation red roses that echo the colour of her cheeks, *they* are slightly, ever so slightly rouged—what I can see of it is still lustrous. But it is not the roses, nor those high, shadowed cheeks, nor that elegant, unselfconscious hand that attract me, that have won my heart already. No. It is the eyes. They are large; they are shadowy, dark pools, and they are—I know it though from here I cannot see that it is so—they are . . . blue.

I do not think I have ever seen eyes before that were quite like these. They and their shadows tell a whole life history; and it is not a happy one. Yes, there on her third finger is a ring. It glistens out against the paleness of the skin. A heavy gold ring. She is a married woman but it is not for her husband that she is waiting. She has left him, a tall tree of a man, with a square head, large protruding ears, and no imagination, she has left him in the shadows of their town house, poring over his books of medicine, has left him to come here and keep her rendezvous. And though she loves her dog, to-day he has been used as an accessory in her game of subterfuge. She left the house telling the grey laconic man that she must take the dog for a walk and get a breath of sea air herself. He, the dullard, would suspect nothing. And if he did, if, as he sat there, he suddenly lifted his eyes from his book with suspicion opening out in them like a dark flower, left his chair to take his hat and come out in search of her, his nervous footsteps would never lead him to this spot, this hide-out. He would never come looking for her in this humble café, this pedestrian little place where the lovers lounge.

He had loved her once when her beauty had been in full flower and she had been the cynosure of all eyes in the small provincial town where she had lived till her twentieth year with her father, a widower and himself a doctor. When he saw her, desire lit its flame in his musty, mottled heart and

within a year she was his bride. She was a married woman before she came of age, with a husband already in his forties. The fire that had burnt fierce and bright in him for a year had rapidly consumed itself to die in its own ashes, and he had returned, happily enough, to his medicine and his books. In that time she had become a woman; and women he never had been able to fathom. For twenty-five years she had remained faithful to him; had run his home, graced his house, and entranced his guests. But as the years had gone by she had seen those temples narrow, the hair fade, the cheeks cave, and although age had so far only succeeded in heightening her beauty, she was a woman and knew that time was short. All this I can read in those eyes of hers. . . .

How fond she is of the dog! Every now and then, as she becomes restless, turning her head away from him to scan the promenade, he, jealous, snuffles his nose in her hand to assert his claim and draw those eyes back, and when she turns to him again with that slight, proud little toss of her head and an almost imperceptible shrug of her shoulders, I see the look in her eye as she sees him there and I know then that she is childless.

Now there are only a few cars gliding by and you can already hear the motor bike far in the distance. At the sound of it she stiffens. It comes roaring up and stops with a splutter at a point on the kerb directly opposite the café; and as the driver bends over to adjust the brake, she turns her head almost as though in alarm, and sees him. She had not expected the bike. He is still bent down over the machine and before he can look up, she turns her head back quickly as though she finds the incongruity of the motor-cycle a little shameful. Her hand moves agitatedly, feverishly, to and fro over the dog's fur.

He gets off the bike and walks across to her. He is dark; not tall, but exceedingly handsome, and he is younger than she. There is happiness and pride and also a shy deference on his face as he advances towards her. He is aware of his social inferiority but in the lightness of his step is the knowledge that what brings them together levels all rank.

Her head is still turned away from him but there is a tension

in the line of her shoulders and the way in which she inclines her head betrays her awareness of his approach. Then, when he is only a couple of yards away from her, she turns. He seems to leap the last two steps towards her, takes her hand in his and bends over it; then pulling up a chair he sits down near her side with a flourish, his eyes never leaving hers, and begins volubly to explain his lateness. She is silent, her eyes held down on her cup and darting up every now and again to flash him an absolving smile and quieten his needless protests. There is a shyness in her face that makes her look much younger and a natural colour has arisen to deepen the rouge on her cheeks.

The waiter walks down the row and the young man beckons him, leaning back at her inquiringly. She chooses curaçao. He gives the order and presently the waiter returns with the two little glasses on the tray. He drinks his at one gulp, she sips hers slowly. He has drawn his chair closer to hers now and she sits facing him, her head with the straw hat and the roses inclined towards his. He is talking animatedly now and his hand closes over hers on the table top, whilst her other hand, the one with the ring, hangs loosely over the arm of her chair, still playing absent-mindedly with the dog's nose.

He is making some proposal to her and nods his head in the direction of the motor bike; she looks gently over her shoulder and then shakes her head, resisting. He becomes more persistent, she more insistent in her refusal, though as she shakes her head, she smiles. Does the fool really think she would ride off with him on the back of that thing? Apparently he does, for he will not give in. He continues to argue, waving his hand eloquently to support his argument, pressing her hand more tightly in his sunburnt fingers, smiling at her, pleading, cajoling. As the waiter passes he renews his order. Her hand has forgotten the dog who is lying on the ground beside her chair, his head on one side, resting ruefully on his stretched out paws, his great brown eye never once letting her out of its sight.

When the waiter has brought the drink and set the two glasses before them on the table, she sips and then leans back

in her chair. Her expression loses its gaiety as she begins to tell him of her husband, all the details of their last disagreement. He listens eagerly, angrily. She is sure he suspects nothing? Oh, no! She smiles bitterly. Nothing. He ceased noticing anything that concerned her twenty years ago. Then he renews his request and this time she stares at the motor bike as though she is trying to imagine herself perched up there at the back on the pillion. Was it really so impossible? Did she really care? His fingers close over her own. She has decided. She will go with him. What, after all, do appearances matter to them? She is even smiling at the thought of it, at the idea of its indignity. He calls the waiter and pays him whilst she searches for her gloves. Then as he gets up and pushes his chair back, she pulls her silk coat about her and rises. Immediately the dog springs up and sets his white paws on her coat, his tail wagging, his mouth open, and she looks down at him, startled. The dog! She had forgotten all about the dog.

She turns to her companion with a look of almost ludicrous dismay and helplessness on her face. But it is evident that her mind is made up. She could not possibly leave her dog behind. There is no longer any question of her going with him on the bike. He does not agree. As they stand there, the dog between the two of them, looking up at her in expectation, his great white plume of a tail swaying to and fro in pleasurable anticipation, the young man begins to make his suggestions. Surely the dog could be left somewhere for an hour? Here in the café. He would call the waiter back. But no, she is determined. There is no possible question of her abandoning her dog. The young man colours up with offence. It is, after all, only a dog. Surely she will not allow a dog to come between them and their desire, their need? But she is adamant and the colour rises on his face as he becomes angry at her determination. He begins to remonstrate with her, and looking anxiously about her, she touches his arm to quieten him and persuade him to sit down again. Shamefaced, he obeys her. But he persists in his accusations and the sight of her, now half-turned away from him and playing with the dog's head in her hands as he sits up with his paws in her lap, exacerbates his anger.

It is all useless. A look of hurt comes to her face at the words he is using now. Is that real love? Is that all she meant? She was, after all, only playing with him, and as soon as her old life makes its claims upon her she submits to it at once, without a struggle. She chooses not him—but her dog. Yes, she says, if he insists on putting it that way, perhaps she does. She chooses her dog.

He stands up angrily, violently pushing back his chair. Very well! In that case he'll go. He'll leave her. She looks up, astonished and hurt, and then, as she sees him standing there, frustrated and out of control, she suddenly laughs. Laughs right in his face. He can't stand that and he seizes his cap and without a word of farewell he is out crossing the street to his bike. He mounts, starts up the engine, his hands fumbling fiercely with the levers on the handlebars and then, slowly, with trembling fingers, he releases the brake. He doesn't once look back at her, but she stands following his every movement disbelievingly. She has discovered that he is still a child, yet she cannot bring herself to believe that he will persist in his demonstration, so that when the bike suddenly roars into life and shoots forward with a splutter and rattle of the engine she stares at it, shocked. He rides on and, without a glance back in her direction, he has already disappeared down the promenade, leaving her standing there, following him with her eyes. Then, a long time after he has disappeared from sight, she turns slowly round, sits down in her chair and stares straight ahead of her. The dog is still standing at her side, watching her. A little trickle of saliva, the residue of his frustrated expectation, falls down from his pink, open jaw, to spittle on the pavement; but she does not notice it; she does not see him. She just sits there and stares ahead of her, her gloved hands folded in her lap, her cheeks still flushed, and those great shadowy eyes huger than ever. Is there—or am I, at this distance, mistaken—is there something in those eyes that is glistening in the sun?

Slowly, dazedly, her fingers grope in her chair for the lead. She finds it, bends down to fasten it on to his collar; as he becomes restless with excitement, her hand taps him in reproof, lightly but angrily, and he stands quite still for

PROMENADE

her. I can see the roses, huge in her hat, as she bends over him.

Then she stands up, shakes herself with a little gesture of defiant pride, of resolution, and with the dog on the lead at her side and her chin tilted, she begins to walk slowly back up the promenade.

I sit watching her, silhouetted by the glare of the falling sun, until she is only a miniature figure in the distance, until she finally disappears from view.

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

ELIXIRS OF LIFE. Mrs C. F. LEYEL. With drawings by E. ELDRIDGE. Faber. 16s.

THE book itself is pleasing: the blue-green of its unglazed linen binding, the dull orange of its upper leaf edges, the *eau de nil* of its jacket; the last a suitable colour base for the black block letters of its title and for the line drawing by Mildred E. Eldridge of the Fringe Tree, *Chionanthus Virginica*.

With the title comes a slight jolt of surprise: *Elixirs of Life*. Are there then more elixirs than one? Far back through the centuries the belief surely was that there was only one ultimate life elixir, and only one philosopher's stone. But Mrs. C. F. Leyel uses the term *elixir* otherwise, and it is only as one reads through her pages that one gains the full implications of her method of use.

The book begins with an author's *Introduction* whose last sentence is worth quoting here: *Sophistication unfortunately has lost us not only our paregorics but a great deal of our natural food*. There are only three chapters in the book, *Nutritious Herbs*, *Bitter Herbs*, and *Tonic Herbs*, the first being by far the longest. Prefacing each is a list of the herbs treated in the chapter, alphabetically arranged, and it is the object of the author to make clear what *elixir* of nourishment or healing property each herb described can yield. Take for instance the Eryngo or sea holly which grows in plenty on the sandhills near my home in Flintshire. Never did I dream that the 'young flowering tops can be eaten, and . . . are very nutritious' nor that the roots have 'somewhat the flavour of chestnuts. They can be boiled and roasted.' More, they can be candied and made into what were, in Charles II's reign, known as kissing comfits.

Systematized details of the herbs are always given: Botanical names, Natural Order, English country names; often French, German, Italian and Spanish, even Turkish, Indian, Chinese or other Eastern names. Frequently the symbolical meaning of a herb is supplied, its habitat, the part used to provide the *elixir* and its action on the human body. At the end of the book

are thirteen indexes of which ten are language indexes. I could wish there were Welsh plant names too, on the lines of those sent by 'Master Robert Davyes of Guissaney, in Flintshire' for the 1597 edition of Gerards *Herball*, but perhaps that is asking too much.

Of the drawings much could be said. They are of convincing sincerity. One has the feeling that Mildred E. Eldridge not only knows the looks of the plants but the touch of them as well, as witness the drawing of Sweet Cicely, *Myrrhis odorata*, with its delicate delineation of sheathing leaf-bases, bi-pinnate leaves, umbels of tiny flowers, and long narrow finely-ribbed fruits.

W. G. WILSON

MINOS OF CRETE. SIDNEY KEYES. Edited by Michael Meyer. Routledge. 10s. 6d. net.

IT is always difficult to edit an author's uncollected work after his death, and when the author has been killed at the age of 20, the problem is more than usually acute, even though the material may be more limited. How much of his juvenilia should be saved from oblivion? Is the editor to take the line that everything which goes to the making of a remarkable personality is important to posterity, or is he to leave out the twelve-year-old's poem, the sixth-form drama, the undergraduate morality play?

There is certainly nothing in the Plays to suggest Keyes' unusual quality. *Minos* is flat, and *Hosea*, though more lively, obvious and sentimental. Keyes himself would probably have suppressed them ruthlessly, for it is clear he was capable of self-criticism and self-discipline. *The Artist in Society*, though of a later date, is the didactic essay that any clever undergraduate might write.

It is in the Stories, the Notebook and the too short extracts from the Letters that we catch glimpses of the essential poet who, if he had survived the waste of war, might have been the leading poet of his generation, who 'was likely if he had been put on To have proved most royally'.

The Stories are not altogether successful, but they suggest an ear for prose and a dramatic instinct much less apparent

in the Plays. There are, too, a poet's vivid images: the strange storm cloud in *The Hearse Roller and the Steam Roller*, the dice-throwing peasants of *Mexico*, overshadowed by the 'tall, cylindrical black rock'. It is interesting, incidentally, that though he insists that the 'ceremonious cacti' which he saw as a child in Mexico made no lasting impression on him, he used the 'seven-branched cactus' as a symbol in the opening section of his fine poem *The Wilderness*.

The Notebook and Letters, even more than the Stories, illumine his personality and purpose. It is not only the occasional poetic phrase: '... Midsummer Night, and there is no real darkness, only a brownish opacity of the air. As I walked in the fields by the sea, just after midnight, the daisies on the grass looked like stars swarming in the November sky. Somewhere I read, a long time ago, that you could make them dance a saraband by scattering centaury on your fire. . .' It is the promise of strength and concentration, the suggestion of bone structure in his work that makes us lament the poet we have lost.

Mr. Meyer, commenting on the diversity of Keyes' gifts, writes: 'Had he survived, he would certainly have experimented further with the drama and the short story. . . .' and he adds that Keyes himself 'wondered whether he would not finish up as a dramatist or a film director'. He might, of course, have branched out in many directions, but one thing seems certain—and on the whole this posthumous collection confirms that certainty—he was a true poet, capable of development and growth of vision, and poetry would have remained his proper centre.

BARBARA COOPER

SWITZERLAND IN ENGLISH PROSE AND POETRY.

ARNOLD LUNN. Eyre and Spottiswoode. The New Alpine Library. 16s. net.

HERE Arnold Lunn presents us with a copious choice of fruit gathered in his wide and curious reading on the theme which he has made peculiarly his own. This skilfully arranged anthology may serve as a companion volume to his *Switzerland and the English* to form a joint study of how Swiss mountains

and English minds have in so many ways done so much for one another. It supplements and extends that earlier pocket anthology of Mr. Lunn's *The Englishman in the Alps*, to which more than a generation of mountain-lovers have owed so much. It is good to note that a new and enlarged edition of that little treasury is on its way. It has worn so well in my pocket and my memory that I came to this successor with great confidence in his judgment.

The special merits of the book are its width and scope. Switzerland and the Swiss as well as the Alps, skiing and ski-racing as well as mountaineering are its topics. The extracts span eight centuries. Mr. Lunn has headed them with dates and preludes, giving a synopsis of the authors' lives, travels, and opinions, mountaineering notes, and divers other matters of moment.

Among these useful things are some hobby horse capers, however. Take Dorothy Wordsworth's descriptions of mountain scenery for example. Much as one likes her quiet and pensive enjoyment of the scene, it is disconcerting to have to read—on the very page where Mr. Lunn has printed her brother's lines on the Simplon ('superb lines' as he well calls them)—that her descriptions are 'incomparably better than anything to be found in the works of Wordsworth'. With the evidence immediately before me I cannot help wondering whether prejudices are not interfering with the Editor's standards. The case is worse when the evidence is omitted. On Shelley, for example, Mr. Lunn fills several pages with somewhat fragmentary and captious comments on Shelley's moral outlook and sanity. As to Shelley's attitude to the Alps, however, the inclusion of a few lines such as:—

The smokeless altars of the mountain snows
Flamed above crimson clouds

or

Multitudes of dense white fleecy clouds
Were wandering in thick flocks along the mountains
Shepherded by the slow, unwilling wind

would have been more to the point than assertions such as 'He neither knew nor loved the Alps' or 'They did not excite him to love or worship. Their grandeur might provoke him to

awe but their beauty left him unmoved.' I am grateful, however, for the further extracts which support Mr. Lunn's conclusion that Ruskin was 'the greatest of the mountain prophets'.

In discussing the aftermaths of the Matterhorn accident and Whympers's character, Mr. Lunn has some interesting novelties to offer. His reminder that Whympers was only twenty-five at the time is useful.

How *new* most of the interests are which these extracts illustrate is the reflection they leave with me. This applies in particular to ski-racing. It is hard to realize, even with Mr. Lunn's help, how swift the development has been, how large his part in it. Mr. Lunn himself invented the slalom. Some of the items are perhaps over redolent of the Club spirit. In a future edition a passage from Arthur Waley might deepen the perspective. It would be short-sighted to expect many of the later extracts to bear comparison safely with the sieved out choice of earlier work. To judge their quality with any confidence we must let them become familiar. Here in one volume is the means to that end.

DOROTHY PILLEY RICHARDS

THE ART OF THE FILM. ERNEST LINDGREN. Allen and Unwin. 16s.

IN his preface, the author endears himself to reviewers by saying that his aim is to give the widest possible currency to ideas which are familiar to film enthusiasts. It is, therefore, no longer pertinent for a cinéaste to remark that the matter in Mr. Lindgren's book is familiar, but it is important to record that it is trustworthy and provides what is probably the best outline of basic facts in circulation. There is an economical survey of how films are put into production, and a streamlined enumeration of the film-maker's tools. The rest, and the major part of the book, is a study in film appreciation, and there are many experts who would benefit by it. For instance, many professional script-writers deserve to be reminded that the unifying element of a film is 'the single action', and Mr. Lindgren gives concise and conclusive argument why the theme of a good screen-play must be embodied in 'a single

clearly articulated course of action'. This is something which is, in its working out, a little less simple than it sounds. Equally effective is the author's refutation of the common cry that a film cannot be 'a pure work of imagination', and he drives home his reasoned reply by asking if any artist does create out of the void, out of nothingness, and quotes Livingston Lowes on the sources of Coleridge's 'creative imagination'. In the end, he says, 'when the script writer. . . sees a succession of visual images pass, he is as much under the spell of imagination, and as able to profit by it, as any creative artist'; for if the film arranges fragments of moving image and sound and thus creates certain relationships, this business of ordering and arranging elements taken from life is precisely the essence of creation in any art.

An admirable emphasis in this book is a chapter devoted to film music. So many critics, who feel indignant if they hear that a director has not edited his own film, are quite undisturbed if they are informed that a director has had no control over the music score. Yet music is an immensely effective part of the film experience. It is, however, a pity, but no fault of the author's, that this book went to press before it was possible to discuss the tremendous new implications of 'independent frame'—the brilliant revolution in film technique devised by Mr. David Rawnsley. The chapter on the cameraman, for example, might be considered a little *démodé*, since independent frame proposes to abolish the motion picture camera and bring electronics to the studio.

OSWELL BLAKESTON

OUR PARTNERSHIP. BEATRICE WEBB. Longmans 25s.

THERE is, of course, a legend about the Webbs, and it is amusing to find certain traces of it in this autobiographical sequence, the successor to *My Apprenticeship*. The legend concerns an inhuman pair of social investigators, whose life was spent between the blue-book and the pigeon-hole, such a pair, in fact, whose portrait is immediately invoked by a phrase on p. 172: 'We have had a happy and successful time here, writing the chapter on the Commissioners of Sewers . . .'

But a legend, while it contains truth, is never the whole

story. Not only do we find Beatrice, and probably Sidney as well, relishing the amusement of the Webb Legend as much as any outsider; we need to reflect, too, that without a certain amount of withdrawal from ordinary pursuits and without some touch of 'inhuman' ingenuity much sociological work that needed to be done would never have been accomplished. What strikes an impartial observer is not the necessary mechanism of their hard labour, but how very fortunate and admirable was their combination of writing 'our solid but unreadable books' with, in Sidney's case, a distinguished career in local and national administration, and, in both cases, with contact, not only on committees, with an astonishing variety of people. What Beatrice records of Sidney and the L.C.C. on p. 83 here is true of them both in general: 'As, in spite of this purely administrative effort, he still finds energy to think, reconstruct past history, to disentangle ideas, I do not feel that his life has been narrowed by becoming mainly practical. To adapt the present machinery to the facts of to-day, to think out the new machinery for to-morrow by the light of yesterday's experience—this combination of practice and theory is, I think, the ideal life for him.'

I believe it was Samuel Butler who said that it was considerate of God to allow Carlyle to marry Mrs. Carlyle, and so make only two people unhappy instead of four. It was equally thoughtful on His part to allow Beatrice Potter to fall in love with Sidney Webb, and Sidney Webb with Beatrice Potter, so making, not only two people happy instead of four possibly unhappy, but one successful writer in place of two possibly unsuccessful. 'Two second-rate minds, but curiously complementary,' recorded Beatrice on the engagement day; we may not agree with this modest estimate, but we can truly lay the stress, as she does herself throughout the diaries which form the kernel of this book, on 'the act of *combined thinking*' that she found 'extraordinarily stimulating.'

Combined thought: that would be expected of them by those who know their legendary Webbs. What is more unsuspected is their combined *emotion*. 'The background of our lives,' says Beatrice on p. 53, 'is luxurious almost to a fault . . . How full and brimming over with happiness human life can

be. How could this happiness become universal or nearly universal—that is the problem.’ And Sidney on p. 345, shrugging his shoulders over ‘the meaning of the universe’, in the cosmic sense: ‘To lessen, by one iota, physical pain or mean motive is a sufficient good for me.’

Beatrice’s longing for a Church may have led her, late in life, to an uncritical enthusiasm for Marxism and the U.S.S.R., but that misinterpretation can be forgotten in the light of the previous work by this ‘religious-minded agnostic’—as she describes herself—and her ‘boy’, whom the same cap fits.

R. C. CHURCHILL

THE ISLAND FEUD. B. DEW ROBERTS. Chatto and Windus. 9s. 6d.

HE WHO HAD EATEN OF THE EAGLE. WILLIAM GLYNNE-JONES. William Maclellan. 7s. 6d.

THESE books have one thing in common. *The Island Feud* opens with an account of a lame boy’s distress when he finds that a cobbler has not finished his new boot; the title story of Mr. Glynne-jones’s collection starts with a visit to a quack doctor made by a small boy suffering from an obscure complaint. Both writers know that a sick child attracts the sympathy of the common reader and they take advantage of the softness of our hearts to interest us also in the lives of more robust creatures.

The lame boy, Gelly Cloff, works for his father on the ferry boat that links seventeenth-century Anglesey with the mainland. He is used by the author to link together a story that stretches over twenty-five years and concerns a feud in the powerful Bulkeley family. Gelly overhears Lady Bulkeley and her lover, Thomas Cheadle, plotting to poison her husband, the fourth Sir Richard. When the deed is done, they marry. Nothing can be proved against them at the moment but years later, they are tried for murder. These incidents are culled from old records and the author’s skill in reconstructing the background and characters is considerable enough to gloss over the melodramatic framework and make a tale that is charming as well as gripping. Thomas Cheadle had been a pirate in his youth and as readers of Miss Robert’s other

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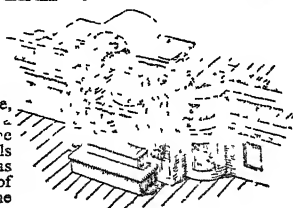
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work will know, she can draw the swashbuckling type very well. I was particularly sorry when a paralytic stroke laid him in his bed since he had the makings of a fine flamboyant rogue of the kind so entertaining and desirable in fiction, so absurd in life. The young rivals who are left to carry on the feud lack Cheadle's personality. The headstrong cavalier and the humorless puritan are rather trite figures. Still, all the world loves a loser when he is dashing and graceful; Richard Bulkeley, in his conduct at the invasion of Anglesey and in his duel with young Cheadle, proves himself as quixotic and ineffectual as any cavalier that ever lived.

The only romantic figures in *He Who Had Eaten of the Eagle* here are the workshy, men like Rocyn and Old Weary who are almost congratulated by the author on their good sense in keeping out of the heat and misery of the works. Twenty stories are printed in the collection and they range from the best, describing resistance to a cruel industrial environment, to *Saved*, which might be a joke printed on a large match-box. Most of them are set in the Llanelly area and the dialogue is a typical mixture of English, Welsh, and American slang. It is clipped and true to the district; in that lies its virtue and effect. In a single story, everyday speech is fitting and most effective but in a collection of such tales, the repetition of commonplace phrase and trite exclamation is tiring. The two best stories are *The Last Day* and *Steel Foundry*. In both, accidents ending in death give poignancy to casual words; a sense of waste fills the reader with anger that such things should be. Background and character are sketched so economically that we are not surprised to learn from the dust-cover that Mr. Glynne-jones has had over eighty stories broadcast. His tales are so brief and so immediate in their effect that they would appear to suit the radio medium admirably.

CECIL PRICE

ADAM IN THE WOODPILE. IAN McLEISH. Home and Van Thal. 9s. 6d.

MR. McLEISH's novel begins in Trinidad with the seduction of a Negro maid by the white master of the house in which she was employed. After the girl became pregnant she was



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FROM ALL CHEMISTS

given a small sum of money and turned out. She got a job in a brothel and later owned one herself.

Her feelings towards her seducer now began to crystallize. She did not look upon him as an outrager but as a benefactor. She doted upon the daughter she bore him and even felt grateful to him; but the explanation for this, Mr. McLeish is at pains to make clear, 'lies in the atmosphere of the country, in which it was plain for all to see that the plums of success and comfort went to those whose parents had kept them clear of the touch of the tar-brush.'

From the marriage which the Negress arranged between her daughter and a retired Scots officer in the merchant navy there was one child, Julie. After the Scotsman's death the question of Julie's future began to exercise her mother, who visualized Julie in a bungalow with some ten-cent clerk who worked in a warehouse and didn't know whether he was more of a Chinaman than a Negro or conversely. 'Don't be impatient!' said the old Negress, 'Anyone can see Julie's not going to be content to spend her life in Port of Spain. She's got her eyes on the world her father came from.'

When Julie was twenty she fell in love with a young English sailor she met at a dance. The day before his ship was due to leave the sailor and Julie went on a picnic by the seaside. As they lay under the shade of the coconut trees the sailor, who knew nothing of Julie's mixed blood or family connections, asked her to marry him. 'Oh, Tom. There's something I must tell you . . .'

An hour later, Tom, wandering after Julie as she hurried into the establishment where the old Negress lay dying, found out everything that Julie had tried in vain to tell him.

When Julie discovered that she was going to have a child for Tom she got Jim Jones, a Negro coachman, to marry her. Tom's child, Susie, showed no taint; but Julie's other child, Peter, was dark.

It is with the story of Susie and Peter Jones who come to England to further their education that Mr. McLeish's fine novel is primarily concerned. Innocent of all colour consciousness and deeply sensitive about the facts of their Trinidad background, the children after one or two jolts become bitter

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REVIEWS OF BOOKS

and disillusioned. Peter seduces the wife of a Cambridge don and is sent down from the university. He returns to the West Indies and is killed in a Jamaica riot. And Susie, after a tragic love affair, joins a Negro political organization and, in order to earn money to keep it alive, becomes a Soho street-walker.

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ERIC WALROND

TRAVELS WITH A DONKEY in the Cevennes. ROBERT

LOUIS STEVENSON. Falcon Press, Ltd. 6s.

SOME people find *Travels with a Donkey* their favourite travel-book. Others esteem it the best of its author's works. Many, therefore, should welcome this excellent reprint. It is well designed, a pleasure both to read and to handle, and its gay binding is protected by a delightful jacket. The volume includes the fragment, *A Mountain Town in France*, written in 1879 and originally intended to serve as the opening chapter of *Travels with a Donkey*.

EDWARD FARRER

EDITORIAL

September, 1948

AN editor tries to share the feelings of both his readers and his contributors; but it is a novelty, I confess, to share my contributors' feelings as vividly as I do now that I find myself, like so many of them lately—rejected, through lack of space. We have already had to hold over Margiad Evans, together with Cecil Price's presentation of five unpublished letters by Lord Chesterfield. In view of that, it would be unbecoming of me to take up more space than is needed by the briefest of Editorials, and I leave as the real introduction to this number the fascinating article by Mr. T. J. Morgan on the Eisteddfod, which he was so good as to describe for us.

This number differs from previous Welsh ones inasmuch as the accent, particularly in poetry, lies more on the past than the present. That is deliberate, for modern Welsh poets have now established themselves so firmly that readers can be trusted to make for them on their own, whilst, in view of what we have done in past numbers, they are perhaps ready to learn more of the literary background of Wales than usually comes their way.

The essays by Margiad Evans and Cecil Price will follow in the October issue, which will also contain an article on mining in the Andes, a new long poem by Hugh MacDiarmid, stories by Phyllis Bottome and a new young Swedish writer, Stig Dagerman. November will be given to the West Indies—Trinidad, Barbados, and Jamaica—and in December will appear our long-delayed Indian number. I am sorry for the continued postponement of that, but originally my own movements made an earlier Caribbean issue more feasible, and recently it has seemed wiser to wait till the return of Dr. Mulk Raj Anand who, now back in this country, is once again furnishing the benefit of his advice and assistance. This number will deal not only with Indian literature, but with films and with the dance in India.

THE NATIONAL EISTEDDFOD, 1948

T. J. MORGAN

THE word 'eisteddfod' is quite genuine and is not a modern fabrication. It is derived from the verb which means 'to sit,' and originally meant 'a session'. It was applied in medieval times to the meetings which the professional bards held on rare occasions to discuss matters appertaining to their craft and guild-like organization. These sessions were not competitive meetings in the modern sense, though we are told that at one of them the arrangement of the twenty-four 'strict' metres as defined by a certain poet was declared to be superior to all others, and that a similar decision was made at another *eisteddfod* as to the best scheme for codifying the rules of *cynghanedd*. 'Alliteration' will not do to translate *cynghanedd* for it completely fails to convey the complexity of the Welsh system of consonantal identity and internal rime, and what is more important, that it is compulsory in every single line of a poem in the 'strict' metres. This introductory matter will help readers to understand the difference between the Chair Poem of the modern eisteddfod and the Crown Poem, if they read on; but this year's Crown Poem will need an explanation of its own.

The modern competitive eisteddfod originated in the second half of the eighteenth century. The old bardic system had broken down in the Tudor period and by the eighteenth century an exact knowledge of the medieval prosody was rarely to be found. The antiquarianism of the eighteenth century made literary men familiar with it once more but the antiquarian impulse alone would have produced nothing better than imitative exercises. The driving force of the literary revival was the feeling that Wales lagged far behind in the race of modern literature. Other nations had epics and heroic odes; Wales had nothing better than doggerel and ballads. The

fervour of the literary revival thus ran into the mould of heroic poetry. What we needed, to restore national prestige, were heroic poems; and as 'heroic' was almost synonymous with Miltonic, this meant long poems on biblical subjects. When a society of London Welshmen set about to organize literary competitions, right at the end of the eighteenth century, they had exactly the same motive as the agricultural societies of the period, that is, the improvement of crops. They wanted to bring out native poetic talent and to provide a pretext for the composition of heroic verse—lengthy, narrative, biblical, serious, and 'sublime'.

It happened more than once at these early eisteddfodau that the adjudicators could not come to a decision for they found in the same competition odes written in the 'strict' metres and odes written in what we call 'free' metres, i.e. verse forms of the English types for which there are no dogmatic rules as to syllabic structure and the compulsory use of *cynghanedd*. The two styles of poetry could not possibly be judged by the same standard, and this explains why two separate competitions for long heroic odes came into being, and why the writer of the best ode in the strict metres is given a chair (and money prize) and the writer of the best ode in the 'free' metres is given a silver crown. (I ought to add that 'heroic' has long ceased to be a requirement in these competitions.)

Something must be said about the Gorsedd of Bards, which is so closely connected with the National Eisteddfod. This again is as recent in origin as the last decade of the eighteenth century. Interest in the Druids and what were thought to be remains of druidic worship, such as stone circles, was more than fashionable in the eighteenth century; it was a cult. Edward Williams, better known by his bardic title Iolo Morganwg, a man of great genius as poet, antiquary and literary forger, took full advantage of the druidic vogue and of contemporary credulity, and made claim that he was the lone survivor of a bardic order which was descended from the druids and had lasted unbroken in Glamorganshire—a sort of apostolic succession of the muse. He also supplied the evidence to substantiate his claim. By his receiving new

members into the druidic circle, the succession was saved from extinction. Linking the Gorsedd to the competitive meetings gave to the eisteddfod an institutional character, for the order gave it a more or less permanent and responsible organization and a ritual. When modern Welsh scholarship demonstrated during the present century that Iolo was a forger and that his claims were spurious, there was verbal civil war between the Gorsedd and the Welsh departments of the University, but there is now less than bickering for even the blimpest of diehards no longer pretends that the Gorsedd is 'genuine', and it is justified solely on the grounds that its ceremony is an attraction, and that it serves as an academy of popular culture.

These small beginnings were the few mustard seeds which grew and multiplied in the nineteenth century and gave us this tropical growth of competitions. If you just picture in your mind the rapidly growing industrial towns of South Wales and the hymn-singing congregations of nonconformist chapels, and see these forces overflowing into the eisteddfod by the inclusion of choral competitions, you will have less difficulty in understanding why the competitive festival came in a short time to be the most popular of all forms of entertainment in Wales, and of releasing local and national effervescence; or in understanding why the literary competitions became mere weeds in the eisteddfodic undergrowth.

Of course, anybody can hold an eisteddfod, any chapel or local society, and very many of varying size and importance are held; but only one National Eisteddfod is held each year, alternately in North and South Wales. The 'National' as an institution is controlled by an Eisteddfod Council; but once the Council's Executive Committee has decided, two years in advance, where the eisteddfod should be held, the immense task of preparation is carried out by the local enthusiasts who dared to invite the eisteddfod to their town.

Think of this year's eisteddfod at Bridgend in terms of figures and dimensions and units of energy: fourteen separate committees, for literature, music, drama, finance, publicity, etc.; a list of subjects for competition amounting to over a hundred pages (including advertisements); getting a temporary pavilion

built, holding twelve thousand people and costing £21,000; choosing one hundred and ninety adjudicators; setting up a local choir of five hundred voices for some of the evening concerts; getting out a programme of the week's business of over three hundred pages; competitions on the Pavilion stage without a break from 9.30 a.m. to 6 p.m. for seven days, (in brackets, in most competitions for individual performers, only two or three would be heard on the stage out of the fifty or hundred competing, almost *in camera*, in the preliminary tests); the reading of adjudications on literary competitions in the 'Literature Tent' throughout the morning and afternoon of five days; annual meetings of seventeen societies held during the week; issuing on Thursday afternoon after the name of the Chaired Bard is announced a volume of two hundred and fifty pages containing some of the successful literary compositions and detailed adjudications. I could go on and on enumerating but I cannot continue this breathless jotting down of items.

The 'National' in more than one sense is the mobile capital of Wales. It is a place and occasion for assembling great numbers, for meetings and discussions and contacts. But more than that, it is the only means we have of doing things on a large scale. How else could we afford to have Ida Haendel, Eileen Joyce, Margarita Grandi, Clarence Raybould, Reginald Jaques, the Liverpool Philharmonic, the Cardiff Philharmonic, the Welsh Youth Orchestra, Elgar's *Music Makers*, Dvorak's *Stabat Mater*, Handel's *Messiah* and a miscellaneous 'celebrity' concert in a comparatively small town all in one week? To show what this means I will here make a confession—if that is the right word. I had already heard and seen Ida Haendel in a Violin Recital; I know Beethoven's Violin Concerto well enough to be almost able to whistle it; but I had never before been present at a performance of this work.

Let me go on with this idea of a mobile capital. In a Grammar School not far from the Eisteddfod Grounds the entries in the Arts and Crafts sections were exhibited. But you could also see there a collection of manuscripts and first editions, from the National Library at Aberystwyth illustrating the literary history of the Vale of Glamorgan. In another room

there was a collection of objects of local interest or historical importance brought from the National Museum at Cardiff. The Arts Council had crowned all this by arranging a special exhibition of the paintings of Christopher Williams, and assembling the biggest collection ever shown together of the paintings and drawings of Augustus John.

Then outside the Pavilion, which looked like the offspring of a prefab and an R.A.F. hangar, there was a large crop of mushroom tents and stalls. In one of the larger tents the Ministry of Fuel and Power were showing a model of a coal mine to illustrate the safety measures now used in the mining industry; and that was not the only Government Department which gave some of its staff a week off, with pay, at the Eisteddfod. But most of the tents were the temporary bookstalls of Welsh publishing firms. The toadstool which grew in the shade of the Luncheon marquee was the 'Literature Tent'. To find this you had to ask and trudge.

I am not competent to speak about music at the Eisteddfod; and in any case there is no difference, musically speaking, between Ida Haendel at an eisteddfod concert and Ida Haendel at the Albert Hall, although it is a sign of something that Ida Haendel and Eileen Joyce should be engaged at all to play in the eisteddfod concerts, and that Beethoven and Grieg should be allowed to trespass on the preserves of Handel's *Messiah* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*. What is more significant is that an orchestra of eighty players drawn from the secondary schools of Wales could provide the first half of one of the evening concerts. As an indication of the quality of their playing you can take not my word but the obvious delight of Clarence Raybould who was their guest-conductor. The conductor, by the way, was the only one who wore evening dress. Most of the boys had flannel trousers and brown boots and it did not matter at all that the young leader took off his coat on the stage between items, and hung it on the back of his chair and then got on with the New World Symphony.

I have a slight prejudice against music adjudicators, believing them as a class to be capricious and too fond of throwing their weight and words about and of being impressive. As far as I can judge the music competitions did not

often 'strike twelve o'clock', as we say in Welsh. The Sale and District choir, from Cheshire, may have struck thirteen for they got ninety-nine marks out of a hundred for their singing of one of the three test pieces. Some Welsh versifier will inevitably look for that one per cent which strayed from the flock. I want to refer to one event in the music competitions to make use of it as a symbol. On Saturday afternoon there was a special competition in which the winners of the separate solo competitions competed against each other for what is now called the 'Blue Riband' prize. The prize was awarded to the bass singer, who is a comparative newcomer and happens to be a Caernarvonshire policeman. A visitor to the Eisteddfod, a woman from New York, was seated immediately behind my wife during this competition, and when she understood that the singer was a mere policeman, she was amazed. Why didn't he go over to the States and join one of the big opera companies there, and win fame and fortune? She wanted to tell him right there to book his passage to New York. Maybe he will do nothing of the kind but this shows what the Eisteddfod occasionally succeeds in doing in spite of its banality. It does sometimes throw up a good singer who might become a great singer; and the encouragement which 'winning the National' gives can be used as a springboard. This, and nothing else, explains why half the names found in London opera houses are Jones or Lloyd or Williams.

The most interesting thing in the volume of literary compositions is the Crown Poem, by the Reverend Euros Bowen. It is not a great poem although it has what I should call great poetic virtuosity. In case any one outside Wales thinks we are innocent enough to believe that Eisteddfod poems are works of genius, believe me, we have no such illusions. Our own critics never let a week pass without saying that Eisteddfod competitions are preliminary exercises for apprentice writers. I tried at the beginning to make coherent the difference between the Chair Poem in the 'strict' metres with compulsory *cynghanedd*, and the Crown Poem, the form of which is undefined and which originated as an alternative to the Chair Poem, and was therefore expected to be in the 'free' metres. About twenty years ago there was more than one attempt to

write a Chair Poem in metrical forms which fell outside the 'twenty-four strict metres', retaining only the requirement of compulsory *cynghanedd*. One of these metrical experiments actually got the Chair, and this poem had strayed farther away from the arithmetic forms of the 'strict' metres than the distance which lies between the 'strict' metres and the 'free' metres in the usual sense of that term, for although it had *cynghanedd* in every line it was in *vers libre*, (which I have heard called the 'go as you please' metre, a name which summarizes the suspicion of many Welsh people as to the validity and poetic value of *vers libre* as a 'form'; and before I close these brackets, I should say that I used the word 'arithmetic' quite deliberately for the syllables in the 'strict' metres must amount to a definite number, and follow unalterable patterns, such as 10 + 6 + 7 + 7.) To safeguard against this heretical prosody the rubric subsequently stipulated that the Chair Poem had to be written within the twenty-four 'strict' metres. At the same time, and quite independently of the Eisteddfod, *vers libre* was coming more and more into use. Then the view as expressed by an eminent critic that even *vers libre* in Welsh ought to bear some resemblance to the 'strict' metres by using a few touches of *cynghanedd* and an occasional phrase which should be intentionally reminiscent of the rhythms of the traditional prosody. But even before this view was put forward, experiment had gone further and poems in *vers libre* had been written and published fully furnished with academically correct *cynghanedd* in every line; and the Chair Poem I referred to a moment ago was an instance of this. But now that the rubric of the Chair Competition precluded a 'go as you please' poem in *cynghanedd* the experimenter in prosody who wanted to use such a form was forced to try it out in the Crown Poem competition, and such a poem came near to winning in 1946. This year a poem in this style got the Crown. We have thus a kind of paradox, for the competition was actually intended for poetry in the 'free' metres in which a poet need not use *cynghanedd*. *Vers libre* may be 'free' but it is freedom in chains if you make your own rule compulsorily to use *cynghanedd* in every line. Once you start using it in a poem you must go on with it; and you cannot use an incorrect sequence

or identity of *cynganedd* for that would be sheer bungling. Sooner or later, of course, the old question will have to be asked and answered, whether poetry in *cynganedd* and poetry entirely free from it can be judged by the same standards—assuming that poetry can be judged at all, in the *eisteddfod* sense.

I expect this sounds very puzzling to those brought up in another literary climate, but that is how our minds have been moulded by our poetic tradition. We elaborate *vers libre* with the same quill and pigment and patience as were used by the scribe who illuminated the Book of Kells.

Now for a hurried flit through the volume of compositions, alighting momentarily here and there. The Chair Poem is not the work of an apprentice. Dewi Emrys had previously won three 'National' chairs and a crown, and the papers gave his age as sixty-six. This poem of his is just another instance of his extraordinary dexterity. I see nothing else of interest or great merit in the poetry section, but think of the energy expended: sixty-eight sonnets; two hundred and eighteen entries for the *Englyn* (the four-line stanza in *cynganedd*); fourteen chair poems of three hundred and fifty lines; nineteen Crown poems; and altogether there were twelve poetry competitions. There were five special competitions set by the Council and not by the local committee, and in three of these no award was made. I had better explain what two of these five were, to show what the *Eisteddfod* at least tries to do. £100 was offered for the best treatise on the history of Welsh scholarship in the nineteenth century. The subject was announced three years ago. Only one treatise was received, a thesis of five hundred typewritten foolscap pages and although not devoid of merit was awarded not even part of the prize. In the other, one treatise of five hundred and fifty foolscap pages on the history of the harp in Wales was sent in for a prize of £50. The full award was made to Bob Owen (never called Mr.), who has long been a 'character' in Wales and is now an 'institution': a man of no college training and less than moderate means who possesses the library of a duke and the flair of a bloodhound for first editions and bibliographical mysteries.

There were six competitions for various handbooks for use in Welsh schools, and fifteen 'prose competitions'. Mentioning two of these will illustrate how well—relatively—we do some things, and how badly others. Thirty-five short stories were received, and although the majority of these would be poor or moderate, the value of the competition should be estimated by the number that got into the top class which four succeeded in doing. Going by the adjudicator's remarks and the quality of the story which got the prize and is published in the eisteddfod volume, I should say that three very fine stories came in—for a prize of three guineas. The prize in the Novel competition was £50 and the 'Eisteddfod Medal', the medal being a sort of counterpart in the Prosewriting section, of the Chair and Crown in the Poetry section. There were four entries, and I can vouch for it that one was an 'old-timer' for it came my way in the 1939 Eisteddfod. The best, or least disappointing, of the four was given £20 and no medal. The moral is that as a nation of amateur authors writing in spare time for a very small public we are incapable, except in pure scholarship, of producing the literature which requires sustained and concentrated attention. The same is true of the Drama section, for awards are made every year for one-act plays whereas the award for the full-length play is withheld more often than not. This year has been an exception. The prize in full for a three-act play was awarded to Islwyn Williams, who is already well known as a writer of short stories and radio scripts and is not unknown to English readers and listeners. It may be a comment on our attempts at fiction that by far the best competition in this year's eisteddfod, judging by the adjudication, was the critical essay on the theology of Karl Barth.

My last glimpse of the eisteddfod was caught as I travelled to my home in Swansea Valley on the Saturday evening. I had to go through Morriston, and Morriston Orpheus had that afternoon won the Chief Male Voice Competition and won a Challenge Cup outright by winning three times in succession. Morriston Cross is where the main road from Swansea crosses the main highway from London to West Wales and a very busy spot it is. When I arrived there, there

was a complete hold-up of traffic. Thousands of people were crowded on the roadway, and in the centre of this excited yet silently attentive mass was the winning choir singing the eisteddfod test-pieces while the traffic lights turned from red to amber, from amber to green and back to red.

On the Sunday evening before Bank Holiday I had given a talk on the Eisteddfod to an audience of visitors from overseas, the guests of the British Council. They were to spend a week at the Eisteddfod. At the end of the week I came across one of the visitors outside the Pavilion; she was a school-teacher from Western Australia. She was exhausted and completely bewildered—and not on account of language difficulties. She simply could not understand or keep up with this rough-and-tumble of art and culture.

THOMAS GWYNN JONES

SELWYN JONES

THE great esteem in which Thomas Gwynn Jones is held was demonstrated at the National Eisteddfod of Wales, at Colwyn Bay, early in August, 1947. For the first time in its history this Festival had a Guest of a different kind. His name heads a long list of some fifteen people of varying eminence. They were Presidents for some part of the eisteddfod. But Thomas Gwynn Jones was the Guest. That the authorities had not over-reached themselves was more than confirmed by the proceedings on Thursday afternoon. Dr. W. J. Gruffydd, the M.P. for the University of Wales, appealed to the Guest to come to the platform while he, Gruffydd, delivered his Presidential address. And as, slowly and painfully, the frail figure of 'Gwynn' was assisted on to the platform, the tremendous audience of more than eight thousand rose to its feet and stood to attention in profound silence without official prompting of any kind.

The task of attempting to explain this to an Englishman—and to a great many Welshmen denied their own cultural heritage by popular education—is extremely difficult. If one were writing of a living French, German, or Italian poet, one would assume on the reader's part some familiarity with the historical background. But in the case of a great Welsh poet—in this case Thomas Gwynn Jones—one is confronted by almost universal abysmal ignorance which almost ignores the existence of any literature in the Welsh language. When, if ever, does one see any discussion on a work written in Welsh in the columns, say of *The Times Literary Supplement*? How rarely, too, does one find an article in English about Wales, without at least one spelling mistake. It is probably one's own ignorance which assumes most Polish, Russian, and Greek words to be correct in this respect. Doubtless the Classical obsession of English scholarship has a great deal to do with the neglect of Welsh and other British provincial studies by the Universities.

Thomas Gwynn Jones was born in 1871, the son of a small farmer in the Vale of Clwyd. He was never himself a student

at any University, but arrived at the Chair of Welsh Literature at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, by way of Welsh journalism and a readership at the National Library of Wales. He was certainly the least academic of professors. Generations of his students bear witness to the tremendous effect on them of his human approach to letters in their own work and writing. Literary tradition has always been a very live thing to him. In his tiny room in the tower one was never allowed to forget that words were written by people, for people, and about people.

No difficulty was raised to confront the officers of the Council of the National Eisteddfod when they set about organizing a National Testimonial to him, towards the end of the war. It came to £1,000, with a cheque for which he was duly presented. In 1944, for its St. David's Day celebration, the Welsh Region of the B.B.C. presented a programme which was a tribute to T. Gwynn Jones.

Here is a typical letter—translated—which accompanied a contribution to his testimonial:

‘The Shaft Lunch-room,
Oakley Slate Quarry.

Dear Compatriot,

In this lunch-room today, we, as quarrymen passed a resolution to send you a word of goodwill and to let you know how happy we are to learn of your recovery of health. We are happy, too, in the thought that the whole of Wales values your great labours, and is paying you a tribute so well-deserved. You are the rich gift of God to Wales. As quarrymen, from the dust of the quarry, we humbly and reverently salute you for your tireless service to our beloved country. We remain, with best wishes,

Evan R. Jones, Chairman.

John Griffith, Secretary.’

The subject of this tribute has been so far recognized as to be the recipient of a C.B.E., but no English University has granted him the D.Litt., which he has been granted both by Wales and Eire. It is possible that he is far better known on the Continent than on the English side of Offa's dyke, if only as a substantial contributor to such journals as *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie*, *Museum*, and *Revue Celtique*.

One can say of the poetry and the prose of T. Gwynn Jones, that his work breathes the very spirit of Wales. To realize

what that means it is only necessary to sit down and try to put one's finger on one name in modern English letters of whom one could say the same for England. He is a great classical poet. That is a statement based on the classical tradition of the Welsh strict metres of which he is supreme master. His roots are, however, as deep in the people as they are in the tradition.

But he has blossomed here and now. Much of what he regards as his best work has gone back to legend for its theme, but he has not allowed the past to forget the present. The Afallon of his *Passing of Arthur* in no never-never land

'There, is the fire of each singing muse,
The strength, hope, desire of all striving men;
Fountain of power to him who wills reform,
The foundation of man's hope;
We shall not age while it nurtures—the precious morale,
Thence comes the breath of the nation's life.'

In spite of a nostalgia, natural to a conscious member of a nation which is still oppressed—if it were not, there would be little or no need for such an article as this—one cannot charge this poet with pessimism, nor can one explain this as the result of ignorance.

Perhaps it is easier to measure this man's stature by a sample of his writings on Ireland, which I translate from a small book which he published in 1919. Bear the date in mind, and ask what English scholars and poets could have been found then even to echo these words:

'Although the English speak of the "wild Irish", one might expect Welshmen, at least to think twice before repeating the phrase. The Irish are not barbarians, and they were not that in the past. Even after English government bred illiteracy through stealing their land and destroying their schools, they have kept by word of mouth, a finer culture, in its day, than that of the gutter press and the cinema, in English. You cannot speak for half-an-hour to an Erse-speaking Irishman without discovering a mind stocked with wisdom; that appreciates the beauty of language; which creates epigrams in his speech; in a word, that his treasury of wisdom is engraved in his memory and not on a scrap of paper which, within the hour will be lighting a fire or wrapping up dirty linen. If I were forced to choose, I would thank God for being a poor "illiterate Irishman".'

It is perhaps as well to add a further extract from the same essay:

'If the people of Britain knew the truth—the story without distortion to the ends of the half-civilized ruling classes of the old world, I do not believe that they would allow the Irish people to be treated in such a fashion. . . . Judge the English. . . by the manners and actions of their ruling class and one cannot avoid the conclusion that the world never beheld a more dishonest or hypocritical nation. But, judge them by their literature, and they come out of the test very well. . . . Who could rationally hate the people described by Chaucer, Shakespeare, Dickens, or doubt the honesty of Milton, Shelley, or Peacock?'

Although in later years Gwynn Jones's work in prose tended to take the form of prepared texts of Welsh MSS. necessary for University students of Welsh Literature, he performed invaluable service for students of Welsh literature who had to be content with the most elementary schooling. His four pocket-size, paper-bound volumes, published at Caernarvon, for a shilling, are as fine an anthology, almost entirely from manuscript sources, as any in the Welsh language. He has written popular novels, too, which breathe the spirit of the life of the Welsh countryside, and are essentially for popular consumption.

His translations into Welsh form a considerable contribution to any Welsh library. In 1903 he collaborated with Daniel Rees to produce a metrical version of Dante's *Divine Comedy*. His version of Ibsen's *Ghosts* appeared in 1920. His metrical version of Goethe's *Faust*, published in 1922, is admittedly brilliant, and in the same year, a valuable volume of poems translated from Erse appeared. Later came selected translated epigrams from Greek and Latin, in which H. J. Rose collaborated, and a fascinating edition of the *Iliad*, in which he completed a task brilliantly begun by Morris Lewis. Later still came translations of von Hofmansthal's *Everyman* and *Theatre of the World*, which, like his version of Shakespeare's 'Macbeth', were originally produced by the Welsh National Theatre. He still continues to write and translate lyrics for music. Some measure of his metrical skill may be seen in the School Song Books jointly published by the Presses of the

Universities of Wales and Oxford. There, a search for the two sets of verses written for the two versions of the traditional air *The Marsh of Rhuddlan* is more than worth-while.

But, it is for his original verse that we are most grateful. He uses colour like a supreme artist and never seems at a loss to find simile and metaphor in nature. Perhaps this is most brilliantly displayed in *Gwlad Hud* (The Land of Magic), where scholarship and the eyes of a great poet combine superbly. One should add, too, the poet's 'ears', since verse in the Welsh strict metres demands 'hearing', otherwise one needs the expert musician's gift of reading a score away from an instrument.

But, even the Land of Magic does not forget the world in which we are reading of it. I have tried here to give you the sense of its penultimate stanza, I make no pretence of presenting its music:

'That was long ago! Before wonder
Deserted the world to the proud and the bold faced;
Before gentleness was called vanity,
Before each lovely old belief's worth was betrayed,
Before the devil of usury and starvation
Dragged life beneath its paws.'

Having mastered the strict metrics of classical Welsh verse, Gwynn Jones continues to modify its canons to his artistic purpose. His influence on modern writers has been very great. Here is Dr. W. J. Gruffydd, in the *Western Mail*:

'But in 1902, a new voice broke upon the literary consciousness of Wales, almost unheralded by any previous utterance, and so overwhelming in its power that the whole future course of the Welsh "awdl" (ode) and even of the Eisteddfod itself was immediately changed. That was when Gwynn Jones won the chair at the Bangor Eisteddfod with his "Ymadawiad Arthur" (The Passing of Arthur) . . . its effect was so great that the poetic activity which it heralded has lasted to this day to form one of the most fruitful periods in our literature.'

It may help to know that the same word is used in Welsh to describe the use of assonance alliteration in verse as for harmony in music—*cynghanedd*. In his volume on Welsh Poetry Sir Idris Bell has used a special translation of Dafydd

ap Gwilym, which Gwynn Jones wrote to illustrate an English lecture. I reproduce it here if only to underline some of the problems with which a translator is confronted. It may also help to explain why Welsh verse is a closed book to the rest of the people of these islands:

¹ 2 3 4 5 ¹ 2 3 4 5
 'Night may dare not my dearest,
¹ 2 3 4 ¹ 2 3 4
 Shadow throw where *she* doth rest;
¹ 2 ¹ 2
 Daylight round her shall dally
¹ 2 3 ¹ 2 3
 As sunshine on snow is *she*;
¹ 2 3 ¹ 2 3
 When amid the gr—een meadow
¹ ¹
 Asphodels and bluebells blow,
 If to the grove she rovetth
¹ 2 3 4 ¹ 2 3 4
 Life's a dance laughs away death.'

(In the fourth line a compromise is necessary—you must place an accent on the second syllable on 'sunshine' to get the effect and throughout the 'r's are trilled).

Gwynn Jones has also written for the stage, and an examination of the vocal score of Dr. David de Lloyd's opera *Tir na n-Og*, where the author supplies an English version of his original libretto, based on part of the story of Ossian, will reveal something of the task of the translator, and something of his success. But, for the theatre, the work which has a particular fascination for me is *Y Gainc Olaf*. One might label it 'Swan Song' in English. It depicts, in eighteenth-century Wales, the civil war for right to the traditional folk songs and dances, with the unconverted fighting to keep them from the lips of the Methodist revivalists in more sombre phrasing.

SELWYN JONES was educated in the Rhondda and the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth. He taught music for a while, and has worked with the National Council of Music of the University of Wales and with (the late?) Lord Howard de Walden's Welsh National Theatre. He is now a free-lance journalist 'with Wales and Music as the strings of the bow'.

THE FIELD

by VERNON WATKINS

There is a goldcup-field upon the hill;
 —Say nothing, nothing—
 Dance, early wind, across those dazzling cups,
 Across the frail gold cups to that round hill
 That stares astounded by the dumb June day
 Wide-eyed, yet sleeping, stupefied by light,
 Where all the may has opened in a night.

Unbroken lies the dew. A rabbit-hole
 Or emerald darkness of the burrowing mole,
 So velvet and so thieflike, deepening now
 Under the sleeping, starless, upturned plough,
 Mock the blunt shares, of motive dispossessed,
 A wheel whose fingers under earth have rest.

Then, if we touch the fronds, if we peer close,
 —O faint the breathing—
 How grips earth's green arm the dilated sense
 With patterns intricate where ants run out;
 How scented springs the breast on which we lean.
 If we look up from that green arm that clings,
 The light will meet us, black as a rook's wings.

Light has so touched us that our lips are sealed;
 Then rustling sound the steps on Enna's field
 Of that white girl, by Pluto's hand delayed,
 Caught in a shaft of noon that flings no shade,
 Plunged from that mother calling her sad name
 While her he crowns with subterranean flame.

Over their bridal sleep the grass uncurls.
 The goldcup wreathing
 Its candelabra can make bright our hands
 With its bent lamp. Black light assails our eyelids.
 The jealous sun would buy us with black pearls.
 Black now is radiant, and the glowworm's belly
 Draws the heavens down to dreaming Botticelli.

POETRY

Press down your eyes. Blind gold the petals break.
Pure darkness, green-shot, glorious as a drake
Caught in the blaze of love's abounding stream,
Purging of every stain the fixed eye-beam,
Reveals those two banks love's own light makes fairer,
Dipinto di mirabil primavera.

SONG

by T. H. JONES

Ten weathers at my finger-tips
May make me wise
When the lost kingdoms of my eyes
Are branch and blossom on my lips.

A cloud and thunder on my brow
May make me sad
When the rough blood turns dark and bad
To stop the singing on the bough.

A rising sun within my heart
May wither me,
Drying the sap, burning the tree,
And killing all my country art.

O weathers, thunder, golden sun,
Make me sad and numb,
And all my singing branches dumb
To see my stolen countries gone.

POETRY

POEM

by T. H. JONES

In that rich dark, that midnight wood,
The ambiguity of your surrender
Taught me a suffering eloquence,
In ravelled prayers to sift and sunder
The cruel politics of the blood,
The vague platonic dissidence.

The treasured spilling of the wine
Showed me a panic imagery,
Your wisdom in that subtle wood
To coil and catch the mystery
In urgent symbols and profane,
The bitter idols of the blood.

But your dear thievery of time,
That dark encounter in the wood,
Has only this obscure result,
The purging of my sullen blood
From contemplation of its crime,
From sombre rapture in its guilt.

In that deep, that secret wood
Flowered these sermons of my art,
Baroque, indecorous, to spurn
And spill the tears of the fanatic heart,
The cold and unbelieving blood,
The passions in the callous urn.

Your forest wisdom harvests now
My singing seasons; from the wine
We spilled within the ancient wood
The reckless odours rise again;
The birds exult on every bough
The midnight victory of the blood.

THE WOMAN OF LLYN Y FAN

(A study in the interpretation of a Welsh Myth)

GWYN WILLIAMS

THE legend of the women of Llyn y Fan is, in the opinion of Sir John Rhys, the most complete of the many stories concerning women who have come out of lakes in Wales, frequently bringing cattle with them. Sir John Rhys, in his *Celtic Mythology*, has recognized the similarity of these stories to the Aphrodite type of myth and he deals with them in a chapter entitled *Undine's Celtic Sisters*, but he does not proceed beyond this to any specific identification.

It is not possible to assert that this legend is older than the twelfth century A.D., in which time it dates itself in its present form, but the same difficulty arises with all old stories, many of which were first recorded in the twelfth century, and the Christian elements in the Mabinogion throw no real doubt on the more ancient, pre-Christian, origin of those tales. Were this tale of the lake woman the only one of its kind one might be justified in suspecting an adventitious and fairly recent birth, but the frequency with which this type of story occurs in connection with lakes in every part of Wales seems to impose a Celtic origin and to make unlikely an entry into Welsh folk lore from classical mythology through literary means some time during the Middle Ages. I propose therefore to make no more difficulty about accepting this story as a version of a Welsh myth much older than the twelfth century before attempting to establish its close affinity to a myth of ancient Greece, an affinity which was first suggested to me by a reading of Freud's study, *The Three Caskets, in the Merchant of Venice*.

But first of all the story must be told, with a numbering of its chief elements which will be convenient for the purpose of reference in the proposed analysis.

A young man lived with his widowed mother at Blaensawdde in Carmarthenshire. One day as he was pasturing the animals on the mountain he saw a beautiful girl on the lake.

1. She was sitting on the surface of the water combing her wet hair, and he fell in love with her.

2. He offered her some of the food which his mother had given him to eat during the course of his day out, but she refused it, saying the bread was too hard baked, and she disappeared under the water. He told his mother of the disappointment he had suffered and the next morning she gave him unbaked bread to take with him, in the hope that this might please the girl. The girl refused this on the grounds that it was too wet. On the third morning the mother gave her son half-baked bread to take with him.

3. This the girl accepted and she said that she would be his wife on one condition, that he would not strike her three times without cause.

4. She then disappeared under the water, but soon returned with her sister and her father, a dignified old man.

5. The father told the young man that he could have the girl for his wife if he could tell which of the sisters he was in love with.

6. The young man was baffled by the girls' likeness to each other and was on the point of abandoning hope when one of them moved her foot a very little way forward, and he recognized her peculiar way of tying her sandals, a thing he had noticed before in admiring her.

7. The father now repeated the warning against the three causeless blows and promised the young man a dowry of cattle to go with the girl.

8. They were married and were happy and prosperous for some years. She bore him three sons who grew up to be talented young men.

9. The first blow. Husband and wife were preparing to go to a baptism and he told her to go to catch the horses whilst he went back into the house to get her gloves. When he returned she had not moved, so he tapped her on the shoulder and said, 'Go on!' She announced the first causeless blow.

10. The second blow. They went to a wedding. In the midst

of all the joy the wife began to weep loudly, so he touched her on the shoulder and asked her why she was weeping. She answered, 'I weep because now their troubles are beginning. And so are yours, for that was the second causeless blow.'

11. The third blow. Some years later they were at a funeral. Suddenly, in the midst of all the grieving, she laughed out loud, and he touched her arm to ask her why she was laughing. She said, 'I laugh because the dead man has escaped from his troubles. You have struck me for the third time without cause. Good-bye.'

12. She went back to the farm and called the animals. They all came to her, the original beasts and their progeny. Even the little black calf just killed came to life on the hooks and followed her as she led them down into the waters of the lake.

13. One day she appeared to her eldest son and gave him medical knowledge of the herbs of the field and many strange recipes, so that her sons and their descendants were known as Meddygon Myddfai, the doctors of Myddfai, and within living memory still followed their art in West Wales.

I have said that many of the lakes of Wales have legends of this kind associated with them. Let me briefly give two examples before going on to analyse the Llyn y Fan story.

A girl of Llyn Nelferch in Glamorgan is wooed, brings cattle, and takes them back into the lake after the third quarrel.

Llyn Barfog in Merioneth is associated with Annwn (the Underworld) where Gwyn ap Nudd dwells. The women of the underworld used to visit the shores of the lake with their cattle and their dogs. A farmer one day caught one of the cows, took it home, prospered exceedingly, grew proud, and then decided to kill the cow. He failed to plunge in the knife, and a woman in green appeared on the hill, calling the cow.¹ The cow went off, taking with her all her progeny into the lake after the green woman. The farmer's wealth declined from that day.²

To return now to the story of the woman of Llyn y Fan. Let us take the story point by point and attempt thereby to establish an identification.

¹ Demeter was known as the Green Goddess. *Vide* Frazer, *Golden Bough*, Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild, vol i, chap ii, p 42

² Both these stories occur in Rhys' *Celtic Mythology*, and in Evan Isaacs' *Coeilion Cymru*.

1. She is combing her wet hair. She is Aphrodite, either being born from water or emerging from the ritual bath which renews her virginity every year.¹ In the Rhodes museum there is a figure known as the Venus of Rhodes who kneels and wrings the water from her hair.

2. The offer of bread. Associations of bread with fertility gods and goddesses are infinite. Adonis is the corn god and Christ's body is bread.² One of the Eleusinian mysteries was the carrying of the image of Iacchos, the god born of the ploughed furrow.³ Iacchos is closely equivalent to Bacchos and to Adonis. He is the son of Persephone, sometimes of Demeter, for mother and daughter are often confused,⁴ and he is sometimes the lover of Persephone. Persephone sometimes represents the seed corn in the underworld,⁵ sometimes she is the growing corn, whilst Demeter, her mother, is the ripe corn.⁶ For Persephone therefore the half-baked bread would be the most suitable offering. Or is the mature Adonis being offered here to his consort, the unbaked dough representing the newborn, the hard baked the dead god?

But bread offerings are even more closely associated with Hecate in the rites devoted to this goddess of the underworld, especially in Hecate's Suppers. These were offerings placed at crossroads (trivia) to placate the goddess and to keep away ghosts and are an aspect of the cult of the dead.⁷ On the eve of full moon, for Hecate was also goddess of the moon, a cake surrounded by lighted candles, very like our birthday cakes, was placed at crossroads, and according to Athenaeus⁸ the cake had to be very carefully prepared according to a special recipe. If the girl of Llyn y Fan is Hecate it is not surprising that she is particular about the baking of the bread.

3. The three causeless blows. Freud, in his short study of the

¹ J. E. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, chap. vi.

² J. G. Frazer, *Adonis*, p. 192 (Watts).

³ "The son is the edible fruit of the field," C. G. Jung, *Psychology of the Unconscious*, p. 205.

⁴ J. G. Frazer, *Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild*, vol. i, chap. ii, p. 67, and note p. 68.

⁵ *Everyman Classical Dictionary*, p. 186.

⁶ H. J. Rose, *Handbook of Greek Mythology*, p. 91.

⁷ K. F. Smith, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Hecate's Suppers.

⁸ *Deipnosophistai*, xiv, 545.

Casket Scene in the *Merchant of Venice*, suggests that the three choices in this story, which was old when Shakespeare used it, represent the three Fates or Moirai, the third of which is Atropos, who cuts off, who is inescapable death. According to Freud all these stories about a choice between three things, as in the Judgment of Paris, are a recognition of ineluctable death, for the third choice is always death, which man has covered over with visions of imagined beauty in order to make it palatable, just as the symbolism of dreams afford a relief from horror.¹

The seasons too at one time were three, spring, summer, and winter, the third being death. The three seasons correspond closely to the three Fates, Klotho, who holds the distaff, Lachesis, who spins, and Atropos, who cuts the thread. In this story the three blows are so trivial ² that they are inescapable, and the third blow brings the return to the underworld, the winter of nature, the cessation of fertility.

4. She disappears into the underworld. The rape of Persephone had made the earth unfruitful and her return brought plenty. Demeter is said to have given man knowledge of corn,³ and in all primitive societies fruitfulness in agriculture is associated with women. They themselves are fruitful, and therefore the earth itself is likely to prove more fruitful if its cultivation is carried on by women.

But who are these three, the dignified old man and the two girls? The father of Hecate is Zeus, and her sister is sometimes Artemis (Diana), the goddess of women. Artemis is sometimes confused with Hecate and is sometimes her companion or attendant. Hecate sometimes becomes Artemis on earth and Selene in heaven.⁴ The old man corresponds to Zeus or to Hades (Pluto) and the two girls to Hecate and Artemis or to Persephone and Demeter. These pairs were frequently confused

¹ I have not at hand the reference to this essay, which I have only read in a French translation. In support of Freud's interpretation of the Judgment of Paris is the fact that in all early representations of this tale on Greek pottery, Paris is either absent or is showing great reluctance and has to be held to his task by Hermes. Harrison, *op. cit.*, p. 293 foll.

² No pun is intended here on the trivia of Hecate!

³ Harrison, *op. cit.*, chap. vi.

⁴ Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

and a goddess, to the Greeks, often took two forms which were easily interchangeable.¹

5, 6 The recognition of the girl by the peculiar tying of the sandal. Rhys tells it thus, ' . . . one of them thrust her foot a slight degree forward. The motion, simple as it was, did not escape the observation of the youth, and he discovered the trifling variation in the mode with which the sandals were tied. This at once put an end to the dilemma, for he who had been on previous occasions so taken up with the general appearance of the Lady of the Lake, had also noticed the beauty of her feet and ankles, and on now recognizing the peculiarity of her shoe-tie, he boldly took hold of her hand.' ²

In the Jerusalem Museum there is a lovely little terracotta Phoenician Venus about whose right ankle a snake's tail is coiled. I took this to be an anklet or strap of some kind, until I noticed the snake's head pointing upwards between her thighs. Hecate sometimes has snakelike feet, so that the curious tying of the girl's sandal may be a memory of the snake feet of the goddess of the underworld.

7. The dowry of cattle. Hecate was a fertility goddess and a beneficent deity in farming. She was the goddess of births, the goddess of marriage, and the multiplier of cattle. The women of Llyn Barfog were dressed in green, the colour of growth, and brought dogs with their cattle. Dogs are closely associated with Hecate,³ her approach was announced by the howling of dogs, and in the comic description in Lucian's *Philopseudes* her dogs are as big as elephants.

8. The happy and fruitful marriage. This is Hecate in her Artemis form, goddess of the child bed, and nurse of youths.⁴

9, 10, 11. The three blows occur at a baptism, a wedding, and a funeral, representing birth, copulation, and death. The variety of Hecate's functions is reflected here, for altogether she seems to play the part of the three fates and to be associated with the most important moments in life in her three personalities of Selene, Artemis, and Hecate.

¹ Harrison, *op cit.*, chap. vi.

² Rhys, *op cit.*, pp. 7-8.

³ Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States*, vol. ii, pp. 501 ff

⁴ Rose, *op cit.*, p. 113

12. Hecate-Persephone returns to the underworld. The black calf is interesting here for black female lambs were important offerings to Hecate.¹ Here the animal is so freshly dead that it can accompany the goddess to the underworld.

13. The knowledge of herbs and recipes. Hecate is the goddess of witches and of strange knowledge. In *Macbeth* she appears to commend the ingredients of the witches' hell broth.² In a poem by Theocritus³ a girl abandoned by her lover appeals to Hecate and Selene together to make her a medicine to bring him back, and the first of the girl's offerings to the joint goddesses is a handful of barley grain.

The girl of Llyn y Fan therefore could hardly be closer to Hecate. If at first we took her to be Aphrodite, and if occasionally she appears to bear more resemblance to Persephone, this does not surprise us when we remember that even in pre-Alexandrian Greek literature Hecate is confused with Aphrodite and Persephone, and that later she fades in and out of these two other goddesses more and more indistinguishably. In some versions of the story of Persephone, Hecate even took part in the search for Persephone after her rape, and thus becomes identified with Demeter.

The girl in this story assembles an amazing number of Hecate characteristics, touching in this way upon almost all the important functions of this three-faced goddess who dominates so many of the essential moments of man's life in this world. The story links her with birth, marriage, and death, with prosperity and the multiplying of cattle, and with the knowledge of nature's secrets.

This is perhaps a suitable moment to consider once more the antiquity of this story. Frazer, in his *Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild*, has related the harvest customs of Northern Europe to Demeter worship and the Eleusian mysteries, and he gives numerous examples of rites connected with the Corn-Mother and the Corn-Maiden from Russia to the Hebrides. In Germany the last sheaf to be reaped is the Corn-Mother, and is the centre of the harvest home ritual. It is often shaped

¹ Farnell, op. cit.

² IV, 1, 25 ff.

³ *Idyll* II, 12 ff.

into female form and drenched with water, a piece of rain magic. In the Hebrides the last sheaf is called the Old Wife, and in Wales a tuft of the last sheaf is plaited and called Y Wrach (the Hag or Old Woman). Gruel at the harvest supper in Scotland and in Wales bwdram are the equivalents of the barley meal and water, flavoured with pennyroyal, drunk by initiates at Eleusis. In Scotland and in Pembrokeshire two figures were often made, and in Scotland they were called Mother and Maiden. When the last sheaf is the Corn-Mother, it is usually avoided or passed on, in the most complicated and (in Pembrokeshire) risky manner; but when it is the Corn-Maiden it is eagerly sought after. In either case it is thought that the person who cuts the last sheaf will get married during the year or will have a child. The last sheaf was often kept and given to the cattle in mid-winter to make them thrive.

In the case of these harvest customs there is no question of recent derivation from Greek mythology, for Frazer judges these rites in Northern Europe to be primitive by the tests his experience in these matters has enabled him to evolve; they are magical, not propitiatory; they have to do with spirits, not gods; they are carried out by anyone, not by priests; anywhere, not in temples. In his opinion, although fragments of these customs still remain in practice to-day, they are older than the Greek myths, more comparable to the unrecorded, less ritualized harvest customs of the ancient peasantry, traces of which still live along the northern shores of the Mediterranean Sea. He says, 'Compared with the Corn Mother of Germany and the Harvest Maiden of Scotland, the Demeter and Persephone of Greece are late products of religious growth,'¹ Persephone too, it will be remembered, was called by the Greeks, Kore, the maiden.

Frazer suggests that the duplication of these goddesses, Demeter-Persephone, Hecate-Artemis, springs from the spirit becoming a goddess, the earlier immanent corn spirit becoming a deity which controls the corn. This is the anthropomorphic stage in the religion of a people emerging from a primitive state and both earlier and later conceptions are recorded in these dualities which seem to us so confusing.

¹ Frazer, *Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild*, ii, chap. v.

Since the story of the Girl of Llyn y Fan is a complete and developed form of a type which is found throughout Wales, since it has this background of lake entrances to the underworld and of impersonal green women with their cattle, it would seem to record a late stage in the primitive growth of the fertility beliefs of the ancient Britons. There should be no difficulty in accepting this in the face of the ubiquity in Northern Europe of corn ritual of the Demeter type and the close similarity of this ritual to what we know of the Eleusinian mysteries.

IV

I shall do no more than adumbrate a psychological interpretation of this tale which, on the whole, is sufficiently comprehensible on its three obvious planes of simple story, fertility myth, and allegory of life. For literature, as for life, the principles of psycho-analysis should be seriously called upon only when there is some dislocation, something which ordinary medicine or straightforward literary criticism cannot fully deal with. When literary criticism has conspicuously failed over the centuries, as in the case of the explanation of Hamlet's hesitation, there is ample justification for the psycho-analyst who wishes to try his hand, as Dr. Ernest Jones has done with Hamlet.¹

In this tale from Central Wales there are points which resist the machinery of common sense as well as the application of analogies from the mythology of ancient Greece, and, since our understanding of the Greek myths themselves has been deepened by the psycho-analytical investigations of the last fifty years, there is a case for applying the new knowledge to such a puzzling incident as we have in point 9 of this story, where the husband tells the wife to get the horses whilst he goes into the house for her gloves, a curious reversal of the normal roles of man and woman.

Once more let us take the story point by point, for it fairly bristles with symbols familiar to the reader of psychology.

1. The lake. Water is a symbol for the amniotic fluid in

¹ E. Jones, *Essays in Applied Psycho-analysis*, A Psycho-analytic Study of Hamlet.

which we swam in our pre-natal days, and exits and entrances to the underworld, particularly through caves, wells, or lakes, are the entrance to the womb. Most of us get over the early desire to return to the womb through experiencing a normal sex life, or through some adequate sublimation of the sexual impulse.

2, 3. According to Ernest Jones,¹ salt is universally an unconscious symbol for fecundity, whilst the substance most often associated with salt is bread. Rice and confetti in modern weddings have taken the place of the earlier wheat grains as fertility magic. The present day wedding cake is very like one of the cakes baked for Hecate's Suppers and surrounded with torches. In many parts of the world bread mixed with salt or with sweat, to symbolise semen, is believed to have the power to win love. Bread has obvious phallic associations in the games and customs connected with cockle-bread in England. Discussing these girlish sports, reference to which continued in nursery rhymes up to the last century, Aubrey says, 'Young wenches have a wanton sport which they call moulding of Cockle-bread, viz. they get upon a table-board, and then gather up their knees and their coats as high as they can, and then they wabble to and fro, as if they were kneading of dowgh, and say these words,

My dame is sick and gone to bed,
And I'll go mould my cockle-bread.'

I did imagine nothing to have been in this but mere wantonness of youth. But I find in Burchardus, in his *Methodus Confiteendi*, printed at Colon, 1549 (he lived before the Conquest), one of the Articles (on the VII Commandment) of interrogating a young woman is, 'If she did ever "subigere panem clunibus"', and then bake it, and give it to one she loved to eat, "ut in majorem modum exardesceret amor," So here I find it to be a relique of naturall magick—an unlawful philtrum.'²

¹ E. Jones, op. cit. The Symbolic Significance of Salt.

² John Aubrey, *Remains of Gentilisme and Judaisme*, quoted from Thoms. *Anecdotes and Traditions*, Camden Society, 1839.

In English poetry, the most charming use of cockle-bread is in the heavily sexual lyric in Peele's *The Old Wives Tale*.¹

Gently dip, but not too deep,
For fear you make the golden beard to weep.
Fair maiden, white and red,
Stroke me smooth, and comb my head,
And thou shalt have some cockell-bread.

In this lyric bread is erotically associated with emergence from water, for the girl has gone to the well to look for a husband, and the well is called the Well of Life.

Ernest Jones refers to the Llyn y Fan story² as an example of bread being used as a love offering, but he attempts no interpretation of the three stages of bread-making which occur here.

4, 5. The return with the father and the need to distinguish the girl. This may be a variant of the Oedipus situation, for we must remember that the second woman is, mythologically, the Mother goddess. The father is stern and makes conditions. The young man must win a normal life by experiencing a normal love, by distinguishing the young girl from the mother, and by selecting her to be his love. This is an allegory in little of the common process of emotional development, in which we are lucky if we are helped by a suitable member of the opposite sex.

6. The sandal. The shoe is one of the most frequently employed of vaginal symbols. An old shoe, easiest to put on, is still tied to the honeymoon carriage after a wedding. If there is anything in my rather far-fetched linking of the sandal strap to the Phoenician snake,³ we have here a phallic symbol joined to a vaginal one.

7. The father has to release his daughter and promises fertility.

8. The happy marriage and the three sons. There are several trinities in this tale, the three sons, the three blows, the three

¹ The 'chopcherry' lyric from the same play should be read in conjunction with this.

² E. Jones, op. cit., p. 184.

³ 'Hecate has snakelike feet, which as in the triple form ascribed to Hecate, points to her phallic libido nature.' Jung, op. cit., p. 223.

solemn occasions, the group of three, the father between his two daughters Freud and Jung take the idea of the trinity to spring from the male genitals.¹

9, 10, 11 The three blows on the occasions of a baptism, a wedding, and a funeral, the ceremonies associated with birth, copulation, and death. Groddeck² stresses the closeness with which these concepts are related in the unconscious mind by etymology within the Indo-European group of languages.

According to Rank³ sexual love heals the wound caused to the psyche by the psycho-physical agony suffered at the moment of birth, the loved woman replacing the mother for the man, whereas the woman becomes the mother in taking the man. Death is the return to the mother. The hesitation of the woman in this story before going to the baptism and her hysterical behaviour at the wedding and the funeral may arise from the anxiety caused by a birth trauma.

I have already referred to the strange reversal of roles in point 9, when the husband goes for the gloves, telling the wife to catch the horses. This is the kind of distortion which, in dreams, myth, and folklore, point to a concealed significance. Here again we have two very common symbols, the horse being a masculine genital symbol⁴ and the glove a feminine one. Her failure to get the horses, or, rather her hesitation before the attempt, would, according to Rank, be a fear of the sexual act, though this, of course, does not agree very well with her having borne three sons, if in fact the sons were born before this incident. There are three blows and three sons, so that each blow may stand for the act which occasioned each gestation, and may record the fear the woman felt on each occasion.

In some of these lake-woman stories the woman must not be struck thrice with iron. A piece of iron would be a more suitable phallic symbol than the hand, for such is the significance of sword and poker in dream and legend. The warning against iron, however, in the other tales may stand for the pre-Celtic

¹ Jung, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

² G. Groddeck, *The World of Man*, chap. viii.

³ O. Rank, *The Trauma of Birth*.

⁴ E. Jones, *The Nightmare*.

fear of invaders of Britain who had learnt to make weapons of iron and were therefore irresistible.

12. The return of the woman to the lake. Pausanius ¹ says that the return of Aphrodite to the water symbolised a renewal of maidenhood. Persephone renews herself annually by returning to the underworld. The desire for death or renewal is the wish to return to the security of the womb, and suicide in water is the desperate means of bringing this about on the part of a person whose emotional life has suffered some terrible dislocation. Ophelia, who has been brutally put aside by her lover, whose father has been killed by her lover and who, in her madness, confuses father and lover, makes no attempt to save herself from drowning. The poet Hart Crane, an indubitable Oedipus case, threw himself into the sea in full awareness of its being a mother symbol.

Groddeck quotes Miguel de Unamuno as saying, 'It is the vision of the past that drives us on to conquer the future; we build the ship of our hopes with the planks of memory. Only the past is beautiful. Death is beauty itself. Do you not believe that when the stream empties itself into the sea it dreams of the hidden springs from which it was born?... If man wants to die, he is longing for the body of Mother Earth.' And, as Groddeck points out, Unamuno is not a psychologist but a poet.²

13. Knowledge and power are associated with the happy pre-natal state when there were no problems and everyone was a king.

The man in the story overcomes a few early problems quite successfully, and goes on to live a balanced and full life in society. For the woman it is different, and the story is her story. She hesitates and behaves hysterically in the presence of birth, love, and death. She fails to get the horses of desire when her husband gets the gloves of satisfaction. She shows fear and anxiety in the face of normal human situations, and she deliberately leaves her life half lived, although she has no reasonable grounds of complaint against life or against her husband, for the three blows are in fact not blows at all. Hers

¹ *Description of Greece*, ii, 38, 2.

² Groddeck, op. cit., chap viii, p. 238.

is a death wish which springs from a birth trauma, as a result of which her emotional development has halted at a too early stage, and she is unable to face the ordinary relationship of man and woman.

V

It is possible, however, to interpret this story without reference to mythology or psychology, as is equally possible with all myths and dreams, but in this case the momentary abandonment of the scholarly apparatus reveals the richness of the human meaning of the story, even though some important details are thus left unaccounted for.

Man is so taken up with the business of living that he forgets his origin and his end. We are born of woman, we propagate our species through woman, and in our end we are taken back to the bosom either of Mother Earth or of the sea.¹ So birth is the first step towards death, inevitable death, and the act of love simulates, at the same time, both birth and death, linking the two tremendous experiences, replacing them for a while, and thus making life tolerable until the ineluctable end.² In this tale the woman's behaviour is a continual reminder of death in life. This is why she laughs at a funeral and weeps at a wedding. Man has more imagination than woman, woman more common sense than man. Man is for ever flying off at tangents, to be brought back by the earthiness of woman as a stone thrown into the air is brought back by gravity to the ground. Our human law of gravity is the urge to return to the womb, it pulls at us throughout our life, and, as this story shows, the urge can be felt as much, or even more, by a woman as by a man.

The tragedy of the story is implied in the Greek counterpart (or prototype, as the case may be), in the duality of Hecate, in the double life of Persephone, in the struggle between earthly love and the ineluctable necessity to return to the underworld, the contrast between what we know of pleasure in life on the one hand and on the other what we unconsciously remember of the pre-natal state of bliss and what, based on that pre-natal

¹ La mer—la mère

² Dryden, *Marriage a la Mode*. The song, 'While Alexis lay prest'

memory, we hope for after death. The girl of Llyn y Fan is the goddess become woman for a space of years, just as Christ became man.

But this humanized myth is not all tragedy. Man must win and lose, harvest time is the old woman bending towards the grave and the young girl from whom new life must come, there is joy as well as grief, there is the successful courtship, then the years of prosperous and happy married life, entirely happy it seems for the husband, the three fine, talented sons, and finally the helpful wisdom given to the world.

CULHWCH AND OLWEN

GWYN JONES

A PAINFUL and constricting modesty is the hallmark of the Welsh, even as a well-meaning but transparent assumption of modesty characterizes our neighbours east of Offa's Dyke. If the English were the possessors of the story of *Culhwch and Olwen*, even in a less accessible, because earlier, form of their language, they would have rung its praises from Carlisle to Taprobane, and through the seas between; by now the scholars of France would have proved its derivation from a French original; the scholars of Germany would have named as its author a mussel-hunting Teuton from the mud-flats of Schleswig; and the theses of the scholars of America would whiten like snow the campi of the North and like cotton those of the Deep South. For this is world literature, resplendent in its own right as heroic narrative, a storehouse of myth and a window upon legend, and the first Arthurian romance in the literature of Europe. But the Welsh hide their treasure in the long black stocking and have yet to edit a readable text of it.

The story, the far-spread folktale of the Winning of the Giant's Daughter, for all its complexity may be summarized in a sentence. It is Culhwch's destiny that he shall marry none save Olwen, daughter of Ysbaddaden Chief Giant. with Arthur's aid he finds his bride, accomplishes the tasks the Giant sets him, and marries her.

A fuller summary will indicate how this simple theme has been elaborated. Culhwch is the son of Cilydd by his first wife Goleuddydd; the destiny is laid on him by Cilydd's second wife, because he will not marry her daughter by her own first marriage. He proceeds to Arthur's court and invokes a boon in the name of Arthur's warriors and the gold-torqued maidens of this island. Arthur grants the boon, but the maiden cannot be found till Culhwch sets forth with the Helping Companions and comes to the greatest of forts in the world. Through the shepherd Custennin and his wife, twenty-three of whose sons Ysbaddaden Chief Giant has slain, they

speak with Olwen and thereafter have three wild and whirling interviews with Ysbaddaden himself. The giant recounts some two score tasks or needs which must be fulfilled before Culhwch shall have his daughter. We hear of the accomplishment of about a third of these, some of them folklore themes like the Freeing of the Prisoner, the Oldest Animals, the Lame Ant, and the Hunting of the Otherworld Boar, and there is a general statement that they are all accomplished. Then Culhwch sets forth with Goreu son of Custennin (the twenty-fourth and only surviving son); the giant is shaved and slain, 'And that night Culhwch slept with Olwen, and she was his only wife so long as he lived. And the hosts of Arthur dispersed, every one to his country And in this wise did Culhwch win Olwen, daughter of Ysbaddaden Chief Giant.'

The story, of which these events are rather the big bones than the whole skeleton, is preserved in part in the White Book of Rhydderch, written down about 1300-25, and more fully in the Red Book of Hergest, of the period 1375-1425. That the redaction took place much earlier is not to be doubted: the tenth century is a date with which few would quarrel. Much of the material is, of course, achingly old; the substratum may well belong to the impressive culture of the megalith builders at the beginning of the second millennium before Christ; and it is tempting to see much of the story against a La Tène background, the kind so dramatically illustrated by the weapons and ornaments, the harness and neck-chains, discovered five years ago at Llyn Cerrig Bach. Later still, there was the brilliant flowering of the early Christian period, when the missionary activities of the Celtic saints united Strathclyde, Wales, and Cornwall with Ireland and Brittany in a cultural revival reminiscent of the days of the megalith builders. It is in this last setting that we must place the Arthur of proto-historic times. *Culhwch and Olwen* owes something to all of these, and it is rather caution than a lack of imagination which now recalls us to a reworking of the material by an artist of the tenth century to whom, in accordance with convention, we assign the title of author and the honour of a final redaction. He was clearly a man of tremendous and distinctive literary gifts, with a virtuoso's joy in their employment. In the

Four Branches of the Mabinogi, that unrivalled relic of the Celtic genius, we recognize a master of another kind, a man writing such perfect and unmannered prose that we are hardly conscious of the means in our wonder at the result. Not so the author of *Culhwch and Olwen*. Language for him was an instrument of effect. Always, he wrote out of his power and zest, now with a brutal curttness, now with a tender lyricism; he is as successful with the gravely beautiful as with the headlong gasconade; he can be furious or comic. He is for ever startling us with some new resource of style; we share his excitement at what he is doing and what he will do next. Eye-widening fantasy or hair-raising grotesque, their challenge is constant. His sentences never trickle: they jet under pressure. He is an exultant author, but never an undisciplined one. His surging energy is harnessed to an unfailing artistic purpose, and he never uses an unnecessary word.

The brevity of his expression is as remarkable as the extravagance of his fancy. Witness his cameos. Morfran son of Tegid: 'No man placed his weapon in him at Camlan, so exceeding ugly was he; all thought he was a devil helping. There was hair on him like the hair of a stag.' Or Cynyr Fair-beard: 'Cei was said to be his son. He said to his wife: "If there be anything of me in thy son, maiden, cold will his heart be ever, and there will be no warmth in his hands."' When he wants to dispatch, no man can be brisker than he. 'The king took counsel where he might get a wife. Quoth one of the counsellors: "I could tell of a woman would suit thee well. She is the wife of king Doged."' They decided to seek her out. And they slew the king, and his wife they brought home with them, and an only daughter she had along with her; and they took possession of the king's lands.' And this, of the end of Ysbaddaden: 'And then Culhwch set forth, and Goreu son of Custennin with him, and every one that wished ill to Ysbaddaden Chief Giant, and those marvels with them to his court. And Cadw of Prydein came to shave his beard, flesh, and skin to the bone, and his two ears outright. And Culhwch said, "Hast had thy shave, man?" "I have," said he. "And is thy daughter mine now?" "Thine," said he.' But he can elaborate lovingly, as in his gallant picture of young Culhwch

cantering to Arthur's court with his greyhounds sporting about him, or the exquisite formalism of his portrait of Olwen: 'So she came, with a robe of flame-red silk about her, and around the maiden's neck a torque of red gold, and precious pearls thereon and rubies. Yellower was her head than the flower of the broom, whiter was her flesh than the foam of the wave; whiter were her palms and her fingers than the petals of the marsh trefoil from amidst the fine gravel of a welling spring. The eye of the mewed hawk, nor the eye of the thrice-mewed falcon, never an eye was there fairer than hers. Whiter were her breasts than the breast of the white swan, redder were her cheeks than the reddest foxgloves. Whoso beheld her would be filled with love of her. Four white trefoils sprang up behind her, wherever she trod; and for that reason was she called Olwen (White-track).'

Twice in *Culhwch and Olwen* our author attempts a mytho-heroic assemblage. The first is the muster of warriors at Arthur's court, the second the list of tasks set by Ysbaddaden. One reads each with the sensation that here, tantalizingly glimpsed, is a vast rolling panorama of lost Celtic story. It would be unwise, maybe, to read into every nickname, each brief ascription, and every reference to the unknown, the hint of a separate saga; but we know from the triads, from brevities in Nennius, and amplifications in Geoffrey of Monmouth, from references to bards and story-tellers, and from the lore demanded of the analogous Irish *ollamh*, that a huge corpus of saga was known to ancient Wales, but few of whose fragments survive. Arthur's court is a fantastic and exhilarating gathering. The old gods are there, euhemerized to men: Manawydan son of Llŷr, Gwyn son of Nudd, and Teyrnnon Twryf Liant; there are the heroes earliest associated with Arthur—Ceï and Bedwyr, Gereint and Gwalchmai (Gawain); Gwenhwyfar and Gwenhwyach will be found, and Drwst Iron-fist and the two Esylts, she of the White and she of the Slender Neck. There are names which may be called historical, like Taliesin Chief of Bards, Dyfnwal the Bald, and Cynwyl the Saint. Ireland sends her heroes, among them Cnychwr (Conchobar) son of Nes; Brittany a prince; and France three kings, including him after whom Paris was named. There are the qualities in

human shape: Drem son of Dremidydd, Sight son of Seer, who saw from Cornwall to Pictland when a fly would rise in the morning with the sun; Clust son of Clustfeinad, Ear son of Hearer, who were he to be buried seven fathom in the earth would hear an ant fifty miles off when it stirred from its couch of a morning. Huarwar was a hungry man: he was one of the three great plagues of Cornwall until his fill was found him. Sugyn was a thirsty: he would suck up the sea on which were three hundred ships till there remained only a dry strand; there was a red breast-fever in him. And Gwefyl (on the day he was sad, one of his lips he would let down to his navel, and the other would be as a cowl on his head), Llwch Windy-hand, Osla Big-knife, Gilla Stag-shank, Henwas the Winged, and the red-eye-stallion Llygadrud Emys—a goblin lot some of these, men of mark the others. And the plangent symphony of the gold-torqued maidens: Celemon, Tangwen, Teleri, their names are harp-notes and drip silver; fair Gwenlliant the magnanimous maiden, and Creiddylad, daughter of Lludd Silver-hand, the maiden of most majesty that was ever in the Island of Britain and its three adjacent islands, and for her Gwythyr son of Greidawl and Gwyn son of Nudd fight for ever each May-calends till the day of doom. In the name of all these did Culhwch invoke his boon, and we need not be surprised that it was granted him.

The List of Tasks loses something of its extravagance if it is studied as a Catalogue of Needs. A pattern, exuberant and heady but fantastically apposite, may then be discerned. Meat and drink and music are needed for the wedding feast; these are remarkable in their nature, and more remarkable for the means whereby they can be secured. 'Dost see the great thicket yonder?' demands Ysbaddaden. 'I must have it uprooted out of the earth and burnt on the face of the ground so that the cinders and ashes thereof be its manure; and that it be ploughed and sown so that it be ripe in the morning against the drying of the dew, in order that it may be made into meat and drink for thy wedding guests and my daughter's. And all that I must have done in one day.' Out of this compulsion sprout five tasks. Only the Great Husbandman can do the tilling; only the Great Artifex can set the irons; and three

legendary brace of oxen must be yoked to the plough. Again, Ysbaddaden's hair must be trimmed and his beard shaved for the wedding. His hair may be trimmed only with the comb and shears from between the ears of Twrch Trwyth, the wondrous Boar. But the Boar cannot be hunted without the whelp Drudwyn; there is no leash in the world to hold Drudwyn save the leash of Cors Hundred-claws; the only collar for that leash is the collar of Canhastyr Hundred-hands; the only chain for that collar is the chain of Cilydd Hundred-holds; there is no huntsman who can hunt with Drudwyn save Mabon son of Modron, and Mabon was taken when three nights old from betwixt his mother and the wall and has never been seen since; Mabon cannot be found unless his kinsman Eidoel is found first; no horse save Gwyn Dunmane (as swift as the wave is he!) can carry Mabon. And so the needs grow into or out of each other through a further eleven tasks. There is probably less invention than deployment. That all the tasks should be fulfilled, and their fulfilment variously and zestfully recorded, would certainly not have strained our author's powers. Whether he deliberately left a framework for other narrators to embroider, or whether we now have preserved a mutilated and shortened version of his masterpiece, there is no way to determine. But the *anoethau*, the marvels and tasks, he has treated with expected mastery.

The lovely little folktale of the Lame Ant starts awkwardly but ends with an admirable precision; the plucking out of Dillus's beard by Cei and Bedwyr is handled with the nonchalant ferocity peculiar to the author. There is a gruesome and comic irreverence in the obtaining of the blood of the Black Witch, daughter of the White Witch, from the head of the Valley of Grief in the uplands of Hell; the slaughter of Wrnach the Giant and the rape of Diwrnach's cauldron (one remembers those magnificent, round-bellied, ring-handled vessels known to Homer and copied by Irish smiths from the Mediterranean artists) are gallant, cunning, and brisk. But it is on the two tasks which involve the Freeing of the Prisoner and the Hunting of the Otherworld Boar that he puts forth all his powers. The contrast of manner is both marked and impressive. The rescue of Mabon from the stone house at

Gloucester is made possible only by the help of the Oldest Animals, and this affords our author a sequence of great dignity and beauty. The Ouzel of Cilgwri, so aged that with his beak he has whittled away a smith's anvil, sends Arthur's messengers on to the Stag of Rhedynfre. The Stag has seen a sapling grow into an oak with a hundred branches and dwindle thereafter to a red and rusty stock, but he knows nothing of Mabon, and sends them on to the still older Owl of Cwm Cawlwyd, who has outlived three forests and whose wings are withered stumps. But in his turn the Owl directs them to the oldest and widest-travelled creature in this world, the Eagle of Gwernabwy. The Eagle has sat on his rock and pecked at the stars each evening till the rock is not a hand-breadth in height, but he knows nothing of Mabon. But once he went to seek his meat as far as Llyn Llyw and there struck his claws into a Salmon who dragged him into the depths. Perhaps the Salmon of Llyn Llyw would know? And from that venerable fish, his back scarred with fifty tridents, they learned of a prisoner who lamented his incarceration at Caer Loyw, and travelled on the Salmon's shoulders and talked with him. And Arthur summoned the warriors of this Island, and Cei and Bedwyr (that cunning, cold, ferocious Cei, whom some later lackey degraded to a buffoon) went with the Salmon and broke through the wall, and 'Arthur came home and Mabon with him, a free man'. The story is superbly told, and its substance is unforgettable. The grave beneficence, the stateliness, the repose and self-sufficiency of the Oldest Animals strike the heart with such sensations as we feel before the standing stones, the burial chambers, the hill forts, and the religious places of our ancestors. Time which bears so hard on us, scurrying like mice in our dim parenthesis between the dark womb and the unlit grave, is their element; time is their substance, their being, their wisdom. How fitting that they help to free the prisoner Mabon, *Maponos*, the Son of Modron (*Matrona*), the Mother; for under the story, as our author records it, may be discerned the successive strata of one of the world's primal myths, coeval with man's first blundering notions of a life past love and hunger, a destiny beyond birth and death. The loss of the Son, the agonizing search, the earth's

desolation till the Prisoner is freed from the Otherworld: it was a story hazed in antiquity when the Greek Pytheas visited the tin mart of Cornwall, its origins forgotten before the heavy iron swords of the Celts cut their conquering swathes through an old, dark Britain. In this part of *Culhwch and Olwen*, myth has declined to folktale; the gods move within shadow; but of its kind the tale is perfect.

One might at this point of the story wonder how even the most gifted writer could avoid some sinking or slackening in what is to come. No man can give better than his best. But one learns of this author that he has many kinds of best, and like the consummate artist he was, he has kept his *tour-de-force* to the last. The Hunting of Twrch Trwyth, or Porcus Troit, was touched on by Nennius in the eighth or ninth century, in his list of the marvels of Britain. So early the feat is ascribed to *Arthur Miles*, Arthur the warrior, but the *miraculum* is a mound of stones on top of which lies a stone bearing the imprint of the foot of Cabal, Arthur's dog. In *Culhwch and Olwen* the *miraculum* is the Hunting of the Boar. Twrch Trwyth lay in Ireland, a king whom God had transformed for his sins, and his seven young ones with him. A royal beast—and in the old and frightening biblical sense, a hardened sinner. 'Harm enough hath God wrought us, to have made us in this shape, without you, too, coming to fight with us . . . And to-morrow in the morning we will set out hence and go into Arthur's country, and there we will do all the mischief we can.' Ireland ravaged in a ten-day battle, and but one pigling slain, Twrch Trwyth and his brood swam the sea to ravage Wales. Arthur and his hosts, his horses and his dogs, went aboard the ship Prydwen and followed them to Porth Cleis in Pembrokeshire, and then by land through South Wales to the Wye and Severn, by a route so exactly marked that the curious may follow their tracks to this day. Time after time they were brought to bay, and always they slew and broke through. Then pig by pig they fell, and a great toll of heroes about them, till at last only Twrch Trwyth and his sons Grugyn Silver-bristle and Llwydawg the Hewer were left. No barrow-pigs, *porci castrati* these, but a match for the bravest and strongest of the Island of Britain. Kings of France and kings of Brittany, Arthur's two

uncles and his one son, three of his porters and his chief craftsman, they were slashed and dashed, tusked and kneaded. Crashing through the brakes, wheeling in the forests, shaggy with spears and their flanks hung with dogs, the three survivors maintain the battle. 'Their snouts dig sepulchres where'er they go.' Their terms are life for life, there is no coming-off for hunter or hunted. Then Silver-bristle was brought down in a ring of slain, and Garth Grugyn for ever marks the place of his quell; and the Hewan, heaped with royal and avuncular spoil, fell at Ystrad Yw. Twrch Trwyth drew off then, and the man is not named who hindered him at his going.

'Twrch Trwyth went then between Tawy and Ewias. Arthur summoned Cornwall and Devon to meet him at the mouth of the Severn. And Arthur said to the warriors of this island: "Twrch Trwyth has slain many of my men. By the valour of men, not while I am alive shall he go into Cornwall. I will pursue him no further, but I will join with him life for life. You, do what you will!" And by his counsel a body of horsemen was sent, and the dogs of the Island with them, as far as Ewias, and they beat back thence to the Severn, and they waylaid him there with what tried warriors there were in this Island, and drove him by sheer force into Severn. And Mabon son of Modron, went with him into Severn, on Gwyn Dun-mane, the steed of Gwedd, and Goreu son of Custennin and Menw son of Teirgwaedd, between Llyn Lliwan and Aber Gwy. And Arthur fell upon him, and the champions of Britain along with him. Osla Big-knife drew near, and Manawydan son of Llyr, and Cacamwri, Arthur's servant, and Gwyngelli, and closed in on him. And first they laid hold of his feet and soused him in Severn till it was flooding over him. On the one side Mabon son of Modron spurred his horse and took the razor from him, and on the other Cyledyr the Wild, on another horse, plunged into Severn with him and took from him the shears. But or ever the comb could be taken he found land with his feet; and from the moment he found land neither dog nor man nor horse could keep up with him until he went into Cornwall. Whatever mischief was come by in seeking those treasures from him, worse was come by in

seeking to save the two men from drowning. Cacamwri, as he was dragged forth, two quernstones dragged him into the depths. As Osla Big-knife was running after the boar, his knife fell out of its sheath and he lost it; and his sheath thereafter being full of water, as he was dragged forth, it dragged him back into the depths

'Then Arthur went with his hosts until he caught up with him in Cornwall. Whatever mischief was come by before that was play to what was come by then in seeking the comb. But from mischief to mischief the comb was won from him. And then he was forced out of Cornwall and driven straight forward into the sea. From that time forth never a one has known where he went, and Aned and Aethlem with him. And Arthur went thence to Celli Wig in Cornwall, to bathe himself and rid him of his weariness.'

Did Twrch Trwyth and the two pursuing dogs reach some happy apple-orchard in the west? Alas, one fears the grim old warrior found briny sepulchre for his smarting wounds. Or are the two things one, and by land- or water-gate he regained the Otherworld? A bloody, spumy death took off the Otherworld Boar of classical legend, the *Aper Calydonius*; Meleager's point reached his brawn-shielded heart after a great ripping and rending of heroes; not Diana herself could save him. And the rampant bristle-armoured sengler whom the Green Knight hunted—'Full grim when he grunted, then grieved many!'—died as a noble boar of This World should, lathered with blood and froth, hurtling self and enemy into the foaming waters of a brook. They got him to shore again, Bercilak's sword to the hilt in his slot, 'and dogges to dethe endite.' But for Twrch Trwyth, when one contemplates as a wise man will, from Tintagel or Land's End, the three diminishing arrow-heads on the gold-fallow water, the thing is not finished, the chance remains. He has our suffrage, ~~our~~ sympathy. *Salve*, great Boar, *Salve atque Vale!*

It has been said that *Culhwch and Olwen* is the first Arthurian romance; by this time one presumes the reader thinks amplification necessary. For the Arthur of whom he is hearing bears little resemblance to the splendid but shadowy figure whose authority is not to be questioned in the long poems of Chrétien

de Troyes and his numerous successors. And wander where they will, his followers are not knights-errant. To confine the contrast to Welsh sources, the Arthur and Cei and Gwalchmei of *Culhwch and Olwen* are barely to be recognized in the persons bearing those names in *The Lady of the Fountain* or *Gereint son of Erbin*. 'Where art thou Gawyn the curtesse and Cay the crabed?' Sir Kay the Seneschal is too much the fool; it is his part to give a rude welcome, to muddle a quest, to attack beyond his strength and be discomfitted. But the Cei of the earlier story and of certain contemporary Welsh poems is a towering formidable figure, unconquerable by man or beast. 'Unless it should be God's deed, Cei's death would be unachieved.' He is first of Arthur's train, a warlock and shape-shifter; he can live under water or go without sleep nine nights and nine days; the wound he deals is mortal; he can be tall as a tree or render things invisible. It is Cei who leads Culhwch to Ysbaddaden's court, Cei who slays Wrnach the Giant, it is on Cei's back that Mabon is borne to his freedom, and it was Cei who planned and with Bedwyr executed the plucking of Dillus's beard. A queer thing followed. 'And then the two of them went to Celli Wig in Cornwall, and a leash from Dillus the Bearded's beard with them. And Cei gave it into Arthur's hand, and thereupon Arthur sang this englyn:

Cei made a leash
From Dillus' beard, son of Eurei.
Were he alive, thy death he'd be.

And because of this Cei grew angry, so that it was with difficulty the warriors of this Island made peace between Cei and Arthur. But nevertheless, neither for Arthur's lack of help nor for the slaying of his men, did Cei have aught to do with him in his hour of need from that time forward.' For the rest of *Culhwch and Olwen* this is simple truth. He disappears from the tale, though the slicing of the Black Witch would seem just the job for him.

The world and climate of *Culhwch and Olwen* are mytho-heroic and not romantic, primitive not courtly; the place-names and compass-bearings are Welsh but the spiritual geography is of Annwn, the Celtic Otherworld. In Nennius

there are references to an Arthur who was the Britons' *dux bellorum* and fought twelve battles against the Picts, the Scots, and the Saxons. His name is a gleam in a dark place, but this is not the Arthur of *Culhwch and Olwen*, that fabulous barbaric chieftan of a barbarous fantastic court, whose rule and realm are of the mind. For his position in legend is already secure, and hero after hero has been drawn into his train. Time has already made him the magnet to whom all great exploits are attracted: freeing the prisoner, hunting the boar, carrying off the cauldron, slaying giants and witches and monsters of all kinds. He is the beneficent folk-hero. The tale of the Giant's Daughter is tacked on to him as surely as pregnant sayings of the English eighteenth century were attributed to Samuel Johnson. Even the Harrying of Annwn is made Arthur's feat, as the Harrowing of Hell was added unto Christ in the apocryphal gospel of Nicodemus. Such a process of accretion is too well known to need illustration. In the 'Matter of Britain' it will grow ever easier for adventures to touch on Arthur, through his men. The pattern begins to reveal itself, the pattern of Arthurian romance, of the adventures that start at Arthur's court but are carried out by Gawain, Galahad, Lancelot, Percival, whom you will, even as in the older *Culhwch and Olwen* they are carried out by such indubitable Welsh legendary heroes as Cei and Bedwyr, Gwalchmei, Menw and Gwrhыр Interpreter of Tongues. Arthur is not here *ameraudur* (*imperator*), though Culhwch greets him as 'Sovereign prince of this Island', but the story contains three illuminating examples of regard for his dignity. At the beginning of the episode of the Oldest Animals; when Menw was sent to Ireland to look on Twrch Trwyth; and at the slaying of the Black Witch, his men are insistent that things petty and unseemly are not for Arthur's own hand; and his intervention in the quarrel between Gwyn son of Nudd and Gwythyr is kingly. It is remarkable how much of this British Arthur has survived in the early twelfth century *Historia* of Geoffrey of Monmouth and the mid-fifteenth century *Morte Darthur* of Malory. Arthur setting off with Kaius and Bedeuerus to slay the swine-eating Spanish giant, and bursting out laughing when the monster crashes like

a torn-up oak, or his battle with the beard-collecting Ritho, are cases in point. The growth may be traced backwards and forwards. Behind the royal features in Geoffrey and Malory may be discerned the ruder lineaments of the folk hero; in the folk hero of *Culhwch and Olwen* one observes adumbrations of king and emperor. If indeed Geoffrey had for source an ancient Welsh book given him by the archdeacon Walter, the strokes of likeness are rather inevitable than surprising. For Arthur was a British king, and what is central in the Arthurian legend derived from British sources. One must be forgiven this platitude, for there have been schools of thought to whom Arthur is no more British than Jesus is a Jew, and who consider the older writings about Arthur less important than later writings about Lancelot. One hopes there is more agreement about these things East of the Sun and West of the Moon than East of the Meuse and West of the Severn.

But it grows time to remember the painful and constricting modesty of the Welsh. In those remote times we have been examining it was an English custom to 'yelp' and a French one to 'gab'—words whose subsequent disrepair should not dull our ears to the vaunting glory of the event. The Welsh as surely had a taste for vaticination compared with which the Delphic Oracle spoke with Augustan clarity. If then one ventures on prophecy with regard to new readers for *Culhwch and Olwen*, it is in the belief that few good things are for ever lost or for long neglected. Its richness as a repository of the early lore of Britain, its singular glory as a well-head of Arthurian romance, and its brilliance as prose narrative, will repay with delight and instruction that fortunate host who now propose to make its acquaintance. By the forty-nine million inhabitants of these islands who have no Welsh it may ~~be read~~ in any of the three English renderings of the Mabinogion; and only the painful and constricting modesty of the Welsh inhibits the writer from recommending the latest and best of these.

STRANGER WITHIN

CON MORGAN

ALTHOUGH it was expected, and usually came about, that money married money in Penpitch, a faint murmur blew through the place when it was known that Emrys Maddox, Mrs. Maddox the Grocer's only son, had got engaged to Tegwen Thomas the Gaer Farm.

It was not that Tegwen was unattractive. She was a meek little frit of a thing with thick dark hair and suspicious black eyes, but the family were a queer lot for anyone to marry into. People remembered that the old man's eldest sister had gone clean off her rocker during the week of Special Services at Calfaria Chapel and had ended her days in the asylum. Another sister had thrown herself into the pond in a fury of shame after an intimate garment had descended about her ankles in the main street. Two brothers were well-known mild eccentrics, and old Thomas himself had been definitely touched, but in a way that did not prevent him from screwing the last brown copper out of a bargain.

At the time, there were two other girls whom Emrys Maddox might have married with the approval of his family; Rhoderick the Minister's daughter, but in the end she thought more of playing the violin and, indeed, went off to study in London, and Winifred Walters, whose father owned the big drapery shop. She was his heart's choice as well as being highly recommended by his mother, but it came out later that she had turned him down in favour of a bank clerk from Swansea. So, apart from one or two strictly brought up girls with no money and a couple of school teachers set in their ways, there was very little choice for Emrys and none at all after his mother had invited Tegwen to tea one Sunday afternoon in order to ferret out how much of the Thomas money was hers. Mrs. Maddox had been more than satisfied with the amount and reassured by Tegwen's quiet manner.

When old Thomas had died of a stroke brought on, so it

was said, by drinking cold water in the hayfield, a thing no sane person would have thought of doing with plenty of cider about, his son had taken over the farm. Rhys Thomas was a sheepish looking man whose head lolled to one side. He was slightly deaf and considered to be half-baked, but he was strong, and a steady worker. He had been snared as a stripling by one with a keen eye to the future and had married, unbeknownst to his parents, a girl who was only one step above the gipsies. When this came out, old Thomas had gone into a frenzy and had turned Rhys away from the house, breaking his mother's heart, though she managed to live in this condition for another ten years and, surviving the old man by a twelve-month, put matters right for Rhys, who was her darling.

Rhys's wife became a large bouncy woman, and by the time he returned to the Gaer he had a daughter as well; a tidy lump of a girl with varnished yellow ringlets, who was called Freda. His wife and his mother pulled together well enough; they were both hard working and thrifty and full of the spirit for getting on, but after his mother's death clashes occurred and his wife, who was now mistress of the Gaer Farm, was unable to enjoy this complete fulfilment of her girlhood dreams and schemes owing to the presence of Tegwen with her creeping ways. It was with great relief that Rhys handed over his sister and her share of the money into the safe keeping of Emrys Maddox.

Marriage with Emrys turned out to be little as Tegwen had hoped it would be and much as she had expected it to be. Her husband was a pompous, handsome, rather bloated young man who consulted his mother on every question of importance; but Tegwen found no fault with him and, since Mrs. Maddox was a stout woman with chest trouble and a weak heart, had every hope that the *daÿ* would come when he would be wholly hers.

It seemed to her that this had come about a year later, and the crown of her life was set upon her head as she lay and watched a small doll-like bundle dressed in the baby clothes she had prepared, being wrapped in the woolly shawl she had knitted, and placed beside her in the bed. In the next room her mother-in-law gasped and wheezed in her last illness. She managed to live through the week, long enough to hold her

grandson in her arms and to decide that he was to be called William Henry after her late husband. This ended her reign.

Tegwen's had barely begun when her glory was shadowed by a doubt that slowly darkened into an awful certainty.

Harry, the baby, was a delicate child. At six months he was very backward; he did not gurgle, clutch at toys, or show any signs of the mental development proper to a child of that age. Slowly and with many set-backs he grew, but at two he was still a baby, not a toddler, and his parents faced the fact that he was not as he should be. Emrys, whose pride had suffered a come-down, ceased to bother with him, but Tegwen cared for him dutifully and did not abandon hope. She cherished a notion that it was all due to weakness and that could the child's bodily strength be improved all would be well. With this end in view she began to coax Emrys to sell the shop and move to the seaside and, since he was not against the idea of leaving Penpitch, they finally bought a small grocery business in a side street of a suburb the other side of Gloport.

Every day Tegwen wheeled Harry along the promenade; every day she eagerly searched for signs of improvement with which to recapture Emrys's interest in herself and his son. But Emrys grew more and more indifferent to both of them; he devoted his days to his business and his evenings to amusing himself in his own way.

By the time he was sixteen, Harry was a tall, strong boy. He had thick curly hair and a well-made body, but his eyes, in the concavity beneath his overhanging forehead, were blank, and opaque as onyx. His movements were swift and unpredictable and he made fierce, croaking cries in his throat. He was dirty and incontinent in his habits but Tegwen kept him spotlessly clean, washing and scrubbing in ceaseless, resentful activity. She realized now that she was hopelessly defeated and that Harry—who was to have been the light of their home, the gift she had given to her husband, for which he would ever repay her with love and devotion—would never be anything but a burden which she, the patient wife, must bear. Sometimes she wondered whether it was too late—perhaps if they could be alone and she had more time to give to Emrys—but her time was all taken up with watching Harry

and coping with his unnatural energy. There were days when he was filled with a destructive rage and tore and worried everything within his reach, but usually he was fairly docile and followed his mother about the house as she did her work, listening to the tick of the clock and capering with excitement at the purr of the vacuum cleaner; or he would stand jabbering and grimacing, picking up and handling things with animal curiosity and imitating all her actions.

About this time, Tegwen received a letter from the Gaer with news of her niece. Freda, who was now a grown woman of twenty-six, had been away nursing in one of the London hospitals but had had something of a nervous collapse and was back at home, recovered and seemingly well enough in herself but suffering from boredom and the lack of variety in the social life of Penpitch. It was suggested that she should come and stay for a while with Tegwen; the seaside would be livelier for her and she could help with Harry and the housework.

Although Tegwen had no great liking for her sister-in-law, and visits on either side were infrequent, she had always observed the rites and ceremonies of 'family' and the ties, though slack, had never been entirely loosened. She remembered her niece as a handsome, robust girl in her teens, headstrong, and spoilt by her parents but full of strident gaiety. The thought of her company began to please Tegwen; she even thought that such careless good spirits might have a healthy effect on Harry. Freda was to come for a week.

Before the end of the first day Tegwen realized that there could be no companionship between herself and the condescending young woman who relegated her to the background while she monopolized the only male present who was worthy of her notice—her uncle. With Harry she was coldly efficient. When he hovered round her, gibbering with curiosity and attempting to finger her hair, she sharply ordered him to sit down and complained that he was badly disciplined. Long before the end of the week Tegwen's disappointment had given place to a smouldering dislike and she was quite ready to see the last of her niece; but Freda was enjoying herself and Emrys, who responded with heavy avuncular playfulness to

her slap and tickle coquetry, encouraged her to prolong her stay.

Through the summer months that followed, Freda continued to enjoy herself. She soon became one of a bevy of young women as self-confident and brassy as herself and was surrounded by admirers, of whom her uncle was one. She was now rather tired of his middle-aged philandering. His large flabby body did not compare favourably with the hairy masculinity of the he-men who rushed her round in their sports cars and dived with such elegance from the highest platform at the swimming pool. But she allowed his devotion; and he bartered his rest and dignity for the chance of holding her in his arms as he trundled her across the floor of the dance hall or, during the day, for a snatched kiss as she walked through the shop, when for a moment her golden hair, damp and darkened with sea water, rested against his cheek.

The way things were shaping was not lost on Tegwen, but she said nothing. She saw no way of shifting Freda, since Emrys stood behind her, and would have continued to look beyond it all to the day when Freda would marry one of her young men or return to Penpitch, if things had not come to a head.

For some time Freda's fancy had been settled on one young man, a commission agent, who quite suddenly decided that Australia was a country with more openings for someone of his ability, and departed for that country. With him went Freda's peace of mind. She swung between moods of hysterical gaiety and sullen depression and turned back, with all her ripeness, for consolation to Emrys, so that things were very warm between them. Soon Emrys's pasty face was haunted and lined with worry. Freda waited while the lines deepened and then suggested he should tell Tegwen a tale of her downfall and desertion by the commission agent now in Australia. Tegwen was well aware of the truth of this and was filled with hope that now Freda would be compelled to return to her father's house. But this turned out to be the last thing she intended to do.

With bitter reasoning Tegwen argued that now Freda should go, and saw how Emrys's eyes grew frightened as he watched

the sobbing Freda begin to dry her tears. In silent anguish she stood and listened to his blustering voice accusing her of harshness and piously denouncing her desire to turn her own niece out of the house. He insisted that Freda should stay.

From the terrible moment when she understood the full meaning of the trickery that had subjugated Emrys, Tegwen was a driven woman.

Freda had started a course of treatment that was to scatter the swelling seed of love and it was during this time of stress and strain that her dislike of Harry grew beyond the bounds of reason. She could not bear him near her and began whining to Emrys that he should be put away.

It was after this that Tegwen started taking Harry into Freda's bedroom. Every day when Freda was out and Emrys in the shop, Tegwen would take Harry by the hand and they would go upstairs. She would open the door and lead him across the room to the corner near the chest of drawers where the bed was. Here they stood while Tegwen made downward thrusts at a spot on the quilt that was just below the pillow, and Harry copied her. Soon he could turn the knob and open the door himself, and presently she had only to take him to the mat at the foot of the stairs and he would go through the whole proceedings by himself. One day she placed an old cushion in the bed and covered it with a sheet; into Harry's hand she put a worn and pointed kitchen knife. At first he was disconcerted by this addition to the usual routine and she had a little trouble with him, but in a few days he had grown accustomed to the use of the weapon and she noticed that the slits in the sheet were all well placed.

Day by day, patiently and skilfully Tegwen trained the boy for the task of removing the intruder. The frothy tide of madness came swirling round her feet but she went silently and swiftly as ever about the house, setting the table with gay coloured crockery, pressing the smooth iron over starched linen and hanging the glossy folded garments to air upon the line in the scullery. The bright mirror above the mantelpiece in the kitchen reflected the order and 'grain' of the room and there were no signs of the dark water that was for ever fretting among the crumbling ruins in the shadowed land where her soul wept.

The summer days wore away to misty weather, to an afternoon of blown wet leaves and gusty rain when Freda, frantic with 'nerves' and the headache that blinded her, groped her way to bed and lay with clenched fists, longing for sleep, while flashes of white fire flared across her eyes. In the shop, Emrys sedately stood beside a sack, weighing and packing sugar with meticulous care, banging the blue bags upon the counter before he folded and tucked in the tops with precise automatic movements. In the kitchen, Harry plunged backwards and forwards in the American rocker, his gaze fixed in a mindless stare upon the opposite wall. Tegwen took the long narrow-bladed knife from the table drawer. She led Harry to the bottom of the stairs and then returned to the kitchen.

The screams had died away by the time Emrys reached the bedroom. As he opened the door Tegwen stood beside him and together they looked into the quiet room. Harry lay sprawled upon his back, his arms flung wide. By his side squatted Freda, a grotesque creature with empty eyes and a twitching face. She mouthed and simpered as she idly dabbled her finger in a small pool of blood that had formed near the edge of the carpet.

THE MACHINE

CECIL PRICE

SHE was very pale; the bone was almost yellow in her cheeks. There was something inert in the way she held the reins, in her nervelessness as she gazed at her husband. He slept heavily as his muscles and only jerked upright when the old cob slowed down to a walk.

He swore angrily and cried, 'Do you want to get there, Lil, with the sun in midsky? How'll we get our ten bob that shape? Sheep will all be pitched before we smell them.' He rubbed the scudge from his eyes and stretched his arms into the air. 'Slash that cob,' he muttered, showing his brown teeth.

Lil pulled at the bit. The early sun dazzled her eyes; the cutting wind made her neck tense. There was a scarlet spot in the centre of her cheeks, not from rouge but from poor living, years of potatoes and tea.

The tub-cart growled in the ruts like a deep bass, her feeling of misery. She was numb as she listened. The face of the baby in her arms was puckered into whimpers; her husband's was fretworked with moroseness. Just for a moment she was isolated from them by the vast melancholy of the wheel.

Her husband snatched the reins. The mare was slashed and made an effort to trot up the hill. The load was too great for her bony frame and she slowed down to make dung, the smell blowing back tartly into the faces of man and woman.

Lil coughed, leaned over and took up the child. Its crying stopped and one of its eyes gazed at her, the other rolling wonderingly. Its hand clutched at her breast. The woman's face softened and she opened her blouse. The baby's eyes came together again, focussed eagerly as it sucked, full of a joyful concentration.

They reached the top of the hill and rolled down the lane between the hazels. The cob's loins were pointed with sweat. The cart stopped among the whitewashed farm buildings and the calling of sheep and lambs blared into the hillside.

'Take the cob out,' her husband ordered. 'I'll see to the machine.' He climbed down and lifted out the machine clippers and went over the yard to the barn. The men by the doors nodded to him without any great show of friendliness.

Lil and her man were strangers, come into the district from away. The woman had been living on a boggy moor in Cardiganshire when she met him, a roamer who had been in Australia, Africa, America. He'd done some sailing, too, and because he seemed to be everything that was different from the men of her parish, she had not taken much conquering. Two of their children had died; the third kicked in her lap.

The man had found a small hill-farm that left him with time to play with the gadgets he loved. Their yard was full of spare parts, mudguards, cranks, and soot-covered plugs. He never put them together. He would spend all day out of doors, fingering them and puzzling, but he never sold off a repaired article. The sheep died of maggots; the cattle broke into their neighbours' fields. The man earned little and did not care. He went on pulling things to pieces.

The only extras he collected came from his work with the shearing machine. He'd learned the tricks in Queensland where tens of thousands of sheep were clipped by electricity. Here, in the Welsh hills and valleys, where the flocks were smaller, he used a hand-powered machine.

Lil sighed. She saw her husband assemble and oil it in the barn. He had found plenty of farmers in the vale who had been ready to employ him but the hillmen were not so forward. They wanted the surface wool left so that the ewes might face the winter with a good covering. They scoffed at his machine and only a few of them would take him on to strip the cross-Clun and Kerry ewes that were kept on the best land by the homestead. The twisty Welsh sheep were retained for their shepherds and hand shears.

She jerked the rein and the cob ambled along the yard to the stable. A short dark lad came out with a bridle under his arm. 'Taking her in, missis?' he asked, his brown eyes twinkling. 'Want a hand to undress her?' She nodded and put the baby in the hay of a calf-cot while she went to the other side of the shafts. She undid the traces, coiled them,

loosened the belly-band, and unfastened the straps. 'I'll take her in for you,' the lad offered.

She was grateful; not many of the men would have bothered to help her. There was a nervous drawing-back in her manner that irritated them. Perhaps they were afraid of her fear. Who knows? As for the women, they ignored her. She was not born in the parish; she would not work with them, handing out the cold meat and vegetables, the rice pudding, and tea. She would not help in the washing-up or take a voice in the gossip. She would be among the men, taking a man's share of the work, turning that patent.

She turned the handle of the shears while he operated the blade. He reckoned to do double the work of the hand clippers and on that account was being paid ten shillings. The others got nothing for their day except their food and the knowledge that everyone helping would visit their farms in turn. Her husband wanted no helpers at home: blow-fly and lack of money had left him with only an hour's shearing.

She picked up the baby and went over the yard. One or two of the men nodded to her. 'A fine day,' they cried, or '*'Y mae hi'n braf.'*' Then they went on with their pipes and watched the catchers with a critical eye.

The sheep were being driven into the middle section of the barn from the far corner where they had been penned overnight. The young dogs were delighted to bark and to rush round the breech of the hindmost. One out-of-mouth ewe stood her ground and would not budge. The pups grew frantic and an old dog set his eye on her. They stayed watching each other, motionless and unaware of the commotion round them. 'She's got the gid,' the farmer cried. 'Take her into the buildings.' The dark lad dexterously swung an arm round the ewe's neck and dragged her off to the cowshed.

At the other end of the barn the shearing benches were set up with a table for the packer. Two rams had been shorn the night before so Lil laid the baby among the fleeces.

The men gathered by their benches, their pieces of tape in hand. '*Rydym ni'n barod,*' the farmer cried. 'Ready, boys *bach.*' The catchers bent over the ewes and carried or dragged them to the shearers. The belly wool was clipped off first,

then the four legs were tied and the rest of the fleece was tackled.

Her husband caught the cross-Kerry by the scruff and swung an arm under its legs. The hooves struck out towards his face and the hind legs reared. The ewe's amber eyes gleamed with fright and her nostrils quivered. He gripped her tightly and nodded to his wife. Lil's arm began to turn the handle that drove the little machine and the man moved the blade neatly over the belly, carefully round the teats. He did not bother with tapes but holding the ewe at full length, started on the main fleece. His shears took off the finicky tuft on the forehead, shaved down the mother wool of neck and back and turned the waxy serrations easily from the flesh. The wool was ripe and the blade neither pugged nor left a gash.

Here her husband was vigorous and precise, wholly on his job, stripping the sheep and showing off before the hand-shearers. Ewe after ewe was taken from the catcher, swung over, and clipped. An old man with a tobacco-stained moustache was packing the fleeces and he was just beginning to be busy. The other men could not hope to keep up with the machine's pace. After a time, her husband only bothered to glance at the pile of fleeces of the fastest of them, the dark lad whose shears seemed a part of his hand. They flashed silver and ran with a savage cleanness of movement through the wool. White lay all the hour on the boy's knuckles.

'Faster. Come on! You're like a month of Sundays.'

The woman's arm responded to the gibe and flushed patches appeared on her forehead and neck. She jabbed at the handle and sucked in her breath; she could feel the perspiration trickling down her armpits. The baby blinked in the corner and twisted its lips.

The handle seemed to go of its own accord and she was only conscious of a dull ache, of her husband bent over the ewes, the sweat glimmering on his nape hair, the clippers skirring across the meshed wool. This was the twelfth shearing they'd been to in three weeks.

'Quicker. What's wrong with you to-day? Stiff as an old flea.'

He was shearing a big wether and had notched the flesh. The animal wrestled, its lips drawn over its six teeth. There

was a mouth of blood on its side and a fat tick lurched in and was lost. The old man with the 'bacco-stained moustache came up to the bench with a small tin of Stockholm tar and a piece of stick. He wheezed as he bent and rubbed the tar into the wound. For a minute or so the resinous smell drove away the mustiness of the wool. In the moment they waited, the woman looked through a hole in the barn door and saw two foxgloves and the hay ready for mowing. There were pears on the tree and a good weight of blackcurrants on the bushes.

The wound was blackened over with tar and the shearing began again. Heat, mustiness, constant rhythmical movement. Oh, she thought she must faint. She lurched a little.

'Steady. Are you cowhocked to-day?'

No one laughed this time. They had observed the growing pile of fleeces by the side of the dark youth. The accident with the wether had set back the progress of the machine shearer. Who would be first by dinner? Everyone hoped that hands would win and the devil be defeated.

'Make it move,' Lil's husband cried to her. 'It only rips the skin if you turn slowly. You know that well enough.'

She turned as fast as she could, her mind wholly on the taste of pears and currants, the sweet smell of the hay and the bitterness of the foxglove. Her arm was not part of her: it was a piece of machinery attached to a handle and she was tied to them both at the shoulder.

'Hell!' her husband cried, and he pushed the ewe to the old man with the tar. 'You take her and mend her and I'll get another.'

'No you don't, boy *bach*,' the farmer cried, coming up from his bench. 'You'll have to sew that gash and you know it.'

Sulkily her husband got the needle and twine and sewed up the wound. He had to hold the ewe still while the old man plastered on a layer of tar.

They started again but the dark youth was one fleece ahead. Though his wool was more matted and kempier, he did not have to take off so much and his chances of cutting an ewe were fewer. He worked with a steady concentration but he looked up once and caught the woman's eye and winked. He had a cigarette behind his ear but not one had been in his

mouth all morning. His pals thought him a hero and a fool. They had been smoking all the time and only had a few fleeces to their credit. The day was early yet.

At noon, Enid, the servant girl, came down to call them for dinner. It was a special occasion and she wore a new pinafore.

The machine had caught up with the hand-shearer but had not beaten him. There were cries of jubilation and the old man patted the dark youth on the back, saying: 'I never had any trust in a patent.' Lil's husband looked murderous.

There was a general clatter as they put away their shears, untied the trussed sheep, and made for the kitchen. Lil took her baby into a corner of the barn to give it suck. When she had done and was leaving, she saw the dark youngster talking to Enid. They were gaming about and he suddenly picked up his clippers and ran it playfully along the nape of her neck. The girl stiffened and stood there as if tingling.

Lil took the baby and went to the kitchen. As she went to sit next to her husband at the table, there was a slight crash from the barn. 'Who's mucking with that machine?' he cried. 'You go and see.'

'It's nobody.'

'A noisy nobody! Go and look.'

She got up wearily and, taking the child, went down to the barn. Her husband—what did those words mean? She went into the building, stopped, and backed out. The youth had the girl against the wall and was kissing her hotly, each kiss as direct and cutting as his shears.

Enid drew her face away suddenly. 'What's that? Is somebody crying?'

'Never mind her,' the boy said lightly, 'it was only that machine woman.'

Lil went slowly over the yard to the stable, put the child again in the calf pen, and harnessed the cob.

Her husband got up when the dark youth and Enid came in to their dinner. 'What's my wife doing down there and what were you doing with the machine?'

'We weren't touching it. We can do well enough without that patent. As for your wife, she's put the mare in the shafts and has gone.'

Nobody ate. They watched the shadow of bewilderment pass over the man's face. 'You say she's gone. Where?'

'Home, I s'pose.'

'Home? And who's to turn the wheel?'

'Seems you'll have to do it yourself,' the youth answered.

'I can't do it alone. I must have her. . . .'

The man looked round at the faces watching him and there was a malicious enjoyment in their eyes. He burst out of the kitchen and ran down to the yard-gate. He could see the lane winding to the top of the hill but there was no sign of the tub-cart. The grey dust had even settled on the hazel leaves. He gave a shout but there was no answer.

He left the machine in the barn and began the long walk home to the holding.

CECIL PRICE was born in 1915 at Swansea and has worked as a farmer and a teacher. His book, *The English Theatre in Wales*, is to be published shortly.

POEM

by MARGIAD EVANS

I ask myself
by what still right
he kills me so?
Is joy in him
A wise dead man,
Contentment freezing snow?

SHEIKYN THE GIPSY

(Chapters from a Novel)

CLEDWYN HUGHES

JUST below the Sws Bridge Sheikyn the Gipsy had drawn up his caravan. In the coolness there, the shadows of the high stone wall long and dark, though the sun was hot on the river water. Making little ripples of light uneven over the shallow Old Ford.

The green caravan with the high yellow wheels tight against the wall. The horse let out now from the varnished shafts and pulling at the long dark green grass. A patch of it between the wall and the water. Under the back axle the dog tied Greyhound with his nose under the bucket of water hanging there, a drop sometimes leaking.

Sheikyn sitting on the steps of his caravan. The wood worn smooth, polished with the years of climbing and sitting. Behind him at the top of the steps the yellow door tightly closed. Only a little bump against it sometimes from the inside.

Sheikyn making the flowers. Peeling and whittling a piece of elder with his knife. The stick between the corduroy of his knees. The knife held firm in his dark hands, the nails with sharp white half-moons on their brownness. The knife curling down long lengths of the stick, bending them over. Cutting off half-way and shaping into delicate petals with quick little turns of the big awkward knife.

A heavy smell of frying potatoes coming out with the thick smoke from the tall black chimney on the one side. A car passing sometimes on the road above. The wind of its passing swirling the smoke down. The drift of it blowing slowly away under the wide arch of the bridge. There with the shadows of the dancing water on the old dark stone.

A sudden rattle of the brass latch. The draught of the opening door raising the long black hair as Sheikyn turned his head quickly to look up the steps. A woman's voice, quick and sharp.

'Sheikyn, the supper, it is ready.'

Gathering up the bits of wood he put them all away carefully in one of the long boxes fastened underneath the caravan. Folding up the knife with a snap. And then up the steps and into the van.

His wife Sal was already on the stool against one side of the tea-chest. The crocks spread out. One side tight against the shelf of the bed, the brasswork bright. The stove in the far corner with the fancy mantelpiece held over it by long twists of snare wire.

'You have been long, girl.'

Sal only a young girl yet assured in all her ways, talking deliberate. A woman of the fairs she had been. Used to handling people at the rolling of the pennies. Sheikyn had taken her away at Christmas time. A Fair and he had been passing through Fon county. Sheikyn's mother just died and he had been lonely in his caravan. Taking the dog in each night to sleep with him. Coming to the Fair in the evening he had found her. And staying late had given her a hand to put up the shutters around her stall. The next night he had taken her away. Driving through the by-lanes for there was the fear that if they had kept to the main roads Sal's father would have caught up with them. For he was a man of cars and had an unfair advantage over any horse.

'See, Sheikyn, if you do not like these potatoes, say so. Then I will not bother any more. You shall do the cooking and I will make pegs or perhaps even go back to my people.'

Sheikyn drank up the tea she had poured him. Played with the potatoes with the two pronged fork. This always was her threat, to go back to her people.

'I was not complaining, girl.'

'Then hold your tongue, you.'

The sudden love which had come to them in the first few weeks had gone now. She longing for the caravan that would move quickly. For a low streamlined thing behind a fast moving car. With cooking from portable gas and with lights on switches from batteries.

She was one of the new people. Sheikyn remembered how his mother had used to spit as she had talked of the gipsies

who had wheels of air to their caravans. Blown up with a pump. Just like holiday folk, she had said. Can't tell whether they work in an office or are half changed gipsies. The way she had used to spit had shown her contempt for both.

Sal talking on again. The way her black eyes seemed to go moist when she was in a temper. The eyelashes shining. Her hair, too, seemed to lose its set greasiness. Falling over her ears and the rings there only a glint of gold through the blackness.

'I shall have to go to a café to eat, Sal, if you do not do the cooking.'

As if she could cook anyway. Ever since a child she had stood in the centre of the stall watching pennies roll. Sweeping them with her long rake. When there was a win, the coin landing on a number, then paying out quickly, contemptuous throws of her hand.

'You would eat in a café, Sheikyn?'

'Rather than trouble you too much, Sal.'

'Trouble me?'

'Yes, girl.'

'Me?'

'Yes, it is the way you grumble.'

'Do I?'

The way she was asking the questions, her voice low and her head nodding all the time. Sheikyn sensing her anger and enjoying the rousing of it. The tiredness still with him from walking the horse up from the valley. All the old stopping places had been taken by the road repairers. Steam-rollers and water-carts parked on them. So that they had had to come right up here to Sws Bridge, right at the top end of the valley.

'Yes you do. Grumble all the time it is. Wish to goodness that I had left you with your pennies.'

She was on him then. Her stool toppling back and her one hand going out before to clutch him. Leaning over the tea chest so that her knees pushed against it, tilting it up. The mugs of tea sliding and spilling. He trying to get up, but she had hold of him now. By the nose of all places. Holding it between her two first fingers and pushing her thumb against the

bottom of it. So that the agony of it was unbearable to Skeikyn. She with this dreadful grip on him with her one hand, and with her other hand swinging the tea-chest to one side by a corner of it. Then she had him on his back, steam rising from his cord trousers where the tea had spilled. The fork still in his hand but he not daring to use it. For the agony on his nose was hardly bearable as it was and there was no knowing what would happen if she should increase it.

Sal hissing now. Crouching a little way in front of him. Her hand out straight before to his face. In between the hisses she was bringing out little words. All in the same low voice.

'Rabbit catcher you. Insulting wimp. Break your nose I will.'

And with that she pressed all the more. He giving a scream and setting off the greyhound barking under the caravan. The noise seeming to increase her temper. She even swaying her hand now, his face going side to side with it to ease the pain.

Sheikyn the Gipsy like that, in his own caravan. In the end having to go on his knees. And it was only then that Sal, this woman of the fairgrounds, let him go. Let him go but not to finish his tea, but to the outside. There with a plate of potatoes in one hand and a mug of tea in the other. These only got after much apology. The tea filled from the lukewarm pot and the chips by now all gone cold. Some with dust on them when the cooling fat had picked up the fluff from the caravan floor.

Sheikyn going out and underneath his own caravan. There with the dog and in the coolness of the grass. Sal bolting the door after him.

Underneath he could hear her walking about. Rattling dishes and putting logs on the fire. Once the sliding open of the window and an opened salmon tin thrown out. Turning over in the air, drops of liquid draining out of it before it fell in the river. Floated there a moment and then sank a sudden gurgle.

Sheikyn watching the tin even after it had sunk. The glint of the metal clearly to be seen on the pebbles of the river bed.

Fancy, any woman of his people wanting salmon from a tin. She was one of the Fair people all right, not knowing salmon from sardine except by the label on the outside.

To-day it was the sheep shearing. The harness-room doors at Pwll Farm opened back wide and fastened to the hot brick walls of the buildings with lengths of old binder twine. Cords cut from the sheaves of wheat at the threshing time.

The old harness-room cleared out for the day and the old broken implements and scrap iron lying now rusty and awkward under the cool of the big greenness of the walnut trees.

The stone floor of the room swept clean and rubbed with a damp cloth to hold the dust down.

And now the sheep penned in the cowhouse next door. Taken out one at a time into the harness-room. There the floor covered with an old tarpaulin to make final certain that the wool was not soiled.

In the one corner the shearing machine on its three legged stand. A handle from it and turned by Mrs. Cas, Pwll Farm. Turned by her and working through a chain drive to the clippers worked by Dick the Cowman.

A pause now at the hottest time of the afternoon. The sunlight in dancing heat on the hot stones of the yard outside. No wind in the trees and through the tall of the trunks the hills blue and far away in mist. Hardly a sound in the valley below. Only in the distance the rattling and squeak of a horse rake. The clatter as the iron teeth raked up the second crop of dried clover. Every few minutes a silence as the teeth raised and left the hay in long straight gathered up rows along the field.

Mrs. Cas leaning on the stand of the shearing machine. Dark skinned and with the little shining sweat on her forehead. Thirty but with her greasy hair full of greyness already. Something of the gipsy in Mrs. Cas so all the parish said. Though she spoke Welsh in a lilting sort of way, yet it was said that her father had come up from England with a caravan. Come just over the border and then had died in Wales. The girl and her mother burying him by night in the soft peaty ground of the heath at the back of Squire's Marsh. Her mother dying soon afterwards and she having to have a decent burial, dying as she did in the workhouse. The girl selling the caravan and the horses and settling in the very end house of

the village. But she had only been there a few months before Cas Pwll Farm had taken her as his wife. An old man like him, in the state he was. And her a young girl hardly twenty with all the lust of life in her.

'Dick, you would not work a horse in all this sunshine?'

'Not I, Mrs. Cas, not I. 'Tis not fit for man or beast to be out in all this sunshine. Don't know what's come over people these days.'

Dick a small stump of a man. So small even that he had to buy a boy's bicycle to ride. And when he sat down night and morning to milk the cows he used a special little milking stool. Dressed always in breeches, even on a blazing hot day like this. Old moleskin leggings. And summer and winter his shirt sleeves rolled up. Wearing a collar of some celluloid with black stripes on it all the winter. And in the summer taking it away, leaving the brass stud dangling bright in the neck of his shirt.

Dick resting now on the tarpaulin. Stained with the grease from the wool and the little drops of blood where once earlier in the day he had cut the skin of a sheep. Done that from not having his hand in at the job, for this was a job of once every twelvemonth.

'Even Mr. Cas would not do that, would he, Dick?'

'No, not that he would. Though—'

And Dick paused. Looked up at Mrs. Cas. A knowing smile passing between them. Dick with his old face and the black and yellow stumps of his teeth when he smiled. Mrs. Cas with her sudden laugh. A flash as it were, her teeth strong and her lips parting wide. The smile quickly passing and then her hand giving a half turn to the shearing machine. A whirr from the clippers. The shake of it trembling the bottle of carbolic oil laid by the side of it. An old feather stuck in the oil and this used to paint the cuts on the sheep. Healing the wound, soothing, and keeping the flies away.

'Shall we carry on, missus?'

'We'd better, Dick, we'd better. The master might come here any minute now.'

'Ay, missus, any minute he might come.'

And Dick the Cowman walked in the rolling way he had.

Out, and around to the cowhouse. Coming back with a sheep between his legs. He sitting on it and pushing along with his heels, hands deep in the thick wool of the neck.

'A big one that, Dick.'

'Ay, missus, 'tis the ram himself.'

'Can you manage him Dick?'

'That I can. I am as strong as he.'

Dick edging the ram to the middle of the harness-room and there pausing a moment. Then with a quick throw of his weight turning the sheep on its side. Legs kicking and then a quietness coming as Mrs. Cas started turning the machine. A rattle and a clatter. The sound coming even and smooth as Dick sank the clippers deep in the wool of the sheep. Dick on his knees and holding the ram tight against his chest. Sliding the shears down the belly of the ram. Opening out the wool ready for the long sweeps of the side and the back shearing.

Mrs. Cas turning the handle, changing from one hand to the other sometimes. Her hair falling past her ear as she bent with the turning.

Dick sweeping and shearing and taking off the wool in a long grey-white piece. The last cut and the ram let free. A smack on its rump and it was running away across the yard. Across to the ewes standing in new whiteness of sheared skin in the shade of the trees. Dick rolling up the wool into a long bundle and piling it on the grey greasy table at the back. Mrs. Cas with an oil-can in her hand. Putting the spout of it into the holes of her machine.

'How many more, Dick?'

'Not many, missus, only three.'

'We'll take it slowly then?'

'Ay, missus.'

'Just in case the master comes and finds us done, he'll get us another job then.'

'That's so, Mrs. Cas. But not say anything will I, for after all your husband he is.'

'And who was working here ever before I came, Dick Cowman? You were here when the first one was alive.'

'Sush now, missus. Let the past be past. She was a good wife to the master.'

'And me?'

'A better, a far better.'

'And how about shearing?'

'Never had the chance to compare. Never had the chance. Master was well enough in those days. He could turn the handle himself then.'

'He'll never do that again anyway. 'Tis hot in here to-day.'

Dick suddenly stopping his talk. His one hand in the air. The sinews and arteries clear on his brown arms. His shirt sleeves rolled even higher to-day and a circle of white skin below the lump of sleeve above his elbow.

'Tis him, missus, I can hear the creak of his chair.'

Mrs. Cas cocked her head on one side, like some spaniel, listening.

'True, Dick. The master's coming. Another sheep now, quick.'

Her voice hoarser as a squeak of moving wheels came louder.

Mr. Cas Pwll Farm in his wheel chair. The squeal of it on the dry stones of the yard.

The master himself was coming.

Dick, without a look up the yard, running to the cowhouse.

Why could not the old man stay in his house on a hot summer's day like this? Years ago he had always been bad enough, though he could get about then all right. But that was nothing to his prowling now. Pushing at the wheels of his chair and taking himself all over the buildings. Putting his nose into this and that.

Dick cornering one of the last three sheep in the coolness of the cowhouse.

Probably the master not trusting him with the missus. Watching her like a mare at foaling time. Suppose it was a worry for him. Him with a twisted body like that and her in her prime. Her body so full of life though her hair was turning grey. Young for that to happen. Being a gipsy, that worried the old man. Afraid that she would be off one night never to come back again. For the blood of the road was strong in her. Even now she could repair baskets far better than Thomas the Basketmaker. And that time in the spring when she had

come with him to set gins. Every snare had had a rabbit in it the next day. For she could set the gin dead in the hop of the rabbit. So that there was no escaping.

The master in the harness-room now. His high voice, like some little boy.

Dick the Cowman straddled the sheep and took it out into the yard. Up and into the harness-room.

Mr. Cas the Pwll Farm sat in his wheel chair just inside the harness-room. Even crouched there in his chair, the size of him could be seen. Seemed too big almost, his shoulders wider than the chair. The wide broadness of his hands on the rubber driving wheels. The rug as always over his knees. His face round as some baby. His head with the fringe of black hair circling the whiteness.

Mrs. Cas standing on the far side of the machine, rubbing the curved metal top with the palm of her hand. As if trying to get a shine on the oiliness.

Dick coming in with the sheep, the noise of his heavy boots and the struggle of the sheep coming into the silence between Mr. and Mrs. Cas. Cas pulling at the rubber wheels of his chair to move it out of the way. At the same time speaking.

'You two, you have been a long time to-day.'

'We have had a lot to do, Fred. It is a hot day and Dick here has been at it hard all the time.'

'Still I can remember the time when we could do the shearing in half a day.'

'Half a day?'

'That. And I would do it now but for this which has ordained that I must stay in this thing for the rest of my days.'

And Cas banged the wheels of his push-chair. The taut wire wheels humming and strumming under his hands.

Dick laying down the sheep and Mrs. Cas starting to turn the machine again. Outside a little wind rising and fluttering in the leaves of the trees. The dry dust on the yard swirling around suddenly sometimes as the wind caught it. And in the far distance a roll of thunder. Black clouds edged with yellow coming up with the wind, piling up castles before the sun.

Cas Pwll Farm wheeling himself to the edge of the harness-room. Looking up at the sky and then bowling back in again.

Calling above the noise of the shearing, his high pitched voice sharp as some squeal of a braking wheel.

'Hurry, you two, the thunder is coming.'

Pushing himself up against the wall and sitting there. Watching the long sweeps of Dick's hand. And the way that Mrs. Cas turned the handle, round and round. Changing hands sometimes. Holding the free arm straight by her side to show the ache that was in the wrist, the pain up the length of it.

Cas Pwll Farm supervising the sheep shearing. The two of them working like slaves for him, some king on his moving throne.

* * *

Pwll Farm had once been Pwll Hall. With acres of gardens and lawns. Even now the mulberry trees still grew in one corner of the orchard. And on the south side of the house nailed to the wall the thick old vine tree. Untidy now and untrimmed, half its grapes stolen each year by the birds.

The inside of the house with a largeness about it. The rooms with a distance and a space. The one wing had been taken down and the cowhouse built on the old foundation. Leaving the front of the house to be lived in. Cas and his wife eating their meals in a barn of a living room.

Cas found the big rooms useful, the wide doors a blessing. For he could trundle his chair about easily. Could move about the inside of the house faster even than his wife. Keeping the wheels of his chair well oiled so that he could move fast and quiet.

The shearing over and done with for this year. Dick the Cowman eating his bread and milk in the back kitchen.

Cas and his wife in the living room. The two doors of it open. One to the back kitchen and the other opening into the long passageway running out from the heart of the house. Once slated but now open. A wind blowing from door to door across the kitchen, gentle, and giving air to the place.

In the distance the thunder still rolling. All the sunlight done.

'A big storm it will be, girl.'

'Yes, Fred. It is rolling up all right.'

'Lucky you finished the shearing when you did. Be a pity to have got the fleeces wet.'

'Ay, Fred. What with wool fetching such a good price.'

'Though they hardly pay for the labour the way Dick and you were working this afternoon.'

Mrs. Cas quiet then. Not answering and learnt not to argue with him. He was always worst at meal times. Having to sit in his chair like some child at food, riled him. He seemed to feel a shame in it. Always banging the table when he wanted something from the other side of it. Salt or a pot of jam.

'What is it, Fred?'

'A knife, woman, how can I eat without a knife?'

'Tis by your side.'

And she leaned across, her one hand on the oilskin cloth. Her fingers splayed out to stop her slipping.

'Look, there, under your plate.'

She moved his plate to one side to show the old steel knife. The bone of the handle discoloured and working loose from the blade. Cas banging the table again.

'Sit down, girl. Do not come sprawling over my table. Sit down I say.'

Taking his hands from the table and waving them in her face.

Obediently she sat down. Went on spreading jam on the rounded slice of the loaf. Taking a long time with it. Making sure that all the butter was covered. For if he saw the piece as she raised it to her mouth, saw it with butter and jam, he would surely start creating again.

'Thunder's coming, Fred.'

'It will be a sharp spell when it comes.'

Cas suddenly bowled himself away from the table with two quick back throws of his hand. Across the kitchen and then quickly up to the door opening into the passageway. Stayed there a second looking up to the sky. Calling back over his shoulder.

'The rain's starting. Rare big spots too.'

* * *

From under his caravan Sheikyn the Gipsy heard the first of the thunder. And after that the neigh of his horse. A

shivering growl from the greyhound and then the opening of the door at the top of the steps.

'Hey, Sheikyn, where are you?'

He crouched lower behind the dog. Hoping that more thunder would come. That she would have to raise her voice and call desperately for him.

But it was the lightning which came first. A few drops of rain and after that a sudden flash. A scream from Sal. The dog yelping and the horse pounding the grass.

Sheikyn quickly crawling out. For even from there he could smell the burning, hear the crackle of burning wood. See the way the dark shadow of the wall lit up with yellow flame.

'Sal, are you all right?'

Around to the front, and there she was. Standing on the top step and reaching inside into the burning caravan. Slinging out clothes and baskets. Boxes and china ornaments. Falling jumbled and awkward on the grass.

'Sal, now, are you all right? Sal, do not stay up there, please.'

Black smoke coming over her head. Crackles as the wood fell in burning splinters. The fancy metal bands of the caravan breaking loose. Screws loosening and jumping out a little way.

'Sal, do come out, girl. You will be burnt.'

But she still there. Crouching on her knees, reaching forward. Sheikyn below trying to catch the things she threw and all the time calling.

Suddenly she stopped. Came slowly back. Even from the bottom of the steps Sheikyn could smell the singed hair. Her dress torn at the shoulder and the skin white there. The darker tan of her face smeared with soot. A red patch above her eye which she kept dabbing with her hand.

Coming down the steps on her sitting. Moving her feet and after that the rest of her body.

Sheikyn moved from the bottom step.

'Sal, are you hurt?'

She sat, her legs out straight and her feet among the mugs and the plates. Without answering she turned and looked over her shoulder at the blaze behind her.

Looked at him again.

'Sheikyn, why did you not get water?'

He started then to move up to the caravan, his one hand before his face to save him from the heat.

But she called him back.

'Sheikyn, it is too late. All the river itself would be of no use now.'

'The dog, Sal, it has broke loose.'

'Gone?'

'Quite gone.'

'The rain's coming Sheikyn, and there will be more thunder.'

'True, Sal.'

'And we have nowhere to shelter. The place has gone.'

She moved from the bottom step and went over to him. Together they stood on the river bank. The dry wood of the caravan in red flame. Even as they watched the chimney, hot and with sparks from it, toppled and fell. Singeing the grass and leaving a black border in the greenness.

'You'd better get the horse, Sheikyn, tie him up. If he goes like the dog he'll not come back. The dog sure will.'

He went along the side of the wall to the corner of the patch where the horse was fastened to a high thorn tree. With soothing sounds and running his hand along its back he caught the horse. Brought him back by a fold of the mane.

'Your face, Sal, is it hurt?'

'Tis nothing, only just a little burn.'

'We have no salve. Was all inside.'

And he nodded towards the caravan.

Still patting her eye and without looking she answered—

'Ay, Sheikyn, all inside, everything.'

* * *

Cas rolled his chair quickly back from the door as the lightning came. Pulling at the wheels of his chair so that it went backwards in a wide arc across the kitchen. Mrs. Cas calling from the table.

'Are you all right, Fred?'

'Fine, girl. That was a sharp flash.'

Then as she stood waiting for the thunder.

'Sit down. No use in standing there like that.'

The lightning and the thunder. Dick the Cowman grating his chair back on the tiles in the other kitchen. And after that the clump of the backstairs and the noise as he walked in the room above.

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Sheikyn and Sal walked out in the rain from below Sws bridge. The rain drumming on the road and the river starting to roar already. The colour of the water changing and the soft ripples gone. All yellow now and gushing at the stone middle pillar of the bridge.

The caravan still burning. Rain hissing on the hot metal framework. Wheels buckling to the one side and the shafts rising and twisting with the heat. Varnish rising in long bubbles. The smell of burnt wood. Sometimes a few flakes of charred linen rising in the air. Falling black on the wet road.

A little while they stood on the wall above looking down.

'No use staying here, Sal, the storm's still around.'

'That it is. We must get shelter.'

'And a new home, Sal, think of that. A new place over our heads.'

'Time enough to think of that, Sheikyn. We cannot stand here all the time in the rain on this road. Let us find a barn, some place to lie.'

'Only one farm between here and the mountains, girl. Only Pwll Farm. But the buildings there are big and roomy. But the owner, old Cas, lives all his days in a bath chair. Helpless from the thighs down.'

'Like that?'

'Like that, and his heart is crippled too. Hard and unable to open. Like a bud with canker in it.'

'But let's try him. The storm is still around and I can feel the rain running wet between my breasts, Sheikyn.'

'Duw girl, let us hurry or the pneumonia you will get. Then it will be the workhouse hospital for you. And you know how quickly they die there.'

Arm in arm they walked up the road. Sudden flashes of lightning dancing and twirling round on the tops of the hills.

The rain coming in great waves. Beating hard and then ebbing again.

Up the long slope of the hill, out of Sws valley. Stone walls for the hedges and no shelter now until Pwll Farm was reached.

* * *

Cas sat in his chair before the window. The view through it smeared by the beating raindrops so that the fields and the buildings were only seen black and green.

Cas before the window and across his knees gently lying the body of his wife.

Only a few seconds now since his hand had let go of hers. Awkward bitch that she had been with arguing and tormenting him in the humble snivelling way she had. Yes Fred and no Fred and all the time making fun of him behind his back. Sneering at him. Lucky Dick had gone upstairs. Or perhaps unlucky for if he'd have stayed downstairs this might have never happened. For it wasn't planned, and now that it was over there was still the violent urge in him. She had died so gentle somehow. In the middle of this thunderstorm with all the noise and all the flashing.

He'd have to be smart about this too. For there was no running away for him. Different he was to other sound men who could leap walls or jump on trains.

Funny how heavy she had gone now that the life was out of her. Only been an accident in some way, not as anybody would believe that in any way. The way she upset him. Come dancing in after the big lightning. The way she had swirled round in passing him. Her hair bouncing about her little ears, the pinkness tantalizing him through the blackness. He had reached out to her. But she had stepped to one side. She was like that. Humble and obeying him with her tongue. Yet in her body she was always defying him, evading him.

He had reached out to her and caught her by the very hem of her skirt. Drawing her towards him and across his knee. The taut way she had fallen, not giving herself to him.

The sneer in her voice as she said that she was tired after all the shearing. That she had done a hard day's work. That it was all right for him sitting there and resting in his chair.

He remembered shouting at her and mauling her. She beating at him with her hands. Kicking him with the backs of her heels.

Then suddenly still. Still as she was now, across his knees.

Knocking on the outside door. Gentle tapping at first. Then louder. Above the noise of the rain and the distant thunder.

Cas rolled her off his knees. Then reaching down with his hand he turned her over. Side to side and into the blackness under the table. The brooch on the front of her breast rasping on the red tiles of the floor.

Then he going over to the door. Bowling himself back a little as he turned the knob.

Sheikyn and his wife there in the rain outside. Each leaning on the other just a little. Sal with her hair wet and twisted into long tight curls.

Sheikyn touching his forehead. A thing he only did once or twice in his lifetime to any man.

'Evening, Mr. Cas.'

Holding the door in his hand, his chair in the opening, Cas nodded back to the two of them.

'Well?'

'My name is Sheikyn and I had a caravan. But 'tis burnt now. The lightning struck it, it has all quite burnt away.'

'Well?'

'Could we please, Mr. Cas, sleep in your buildings? Just a little straw is all we need. My wife here, she is very wet.'

And Sheikyn made a half flap of his wrist towards Sal.

Cas held tight with one hand to the door. The other hand tight to the wheels of his chair. His knuckles coming white through the red skin.

'I have no straw.'

'We could sleep without straw, Mr. Cas. Sleep on the floor of the barn. My wife here is very wet.'

A moment before Cas spoke again.

'You are gipsies?'

Standing straighter by his wife Sheikyn took the point of her elbow in his hand.

'We are, Mr. Cas.'

'How did you know my name?'

'We know most of the farms. 'Tis part of our jobs.'

'You are gipsies you say?'

'Yes, we had our caravan. We would not trouble you but that it has been quite burnt away.'

Mr. Cas was skewing his chair away from the door. Scooping the air with his hands and his voice hoarse and low.

'Be off with you, the pair of you. Any other breed in the whole wide world I would let sleep in my barns. But such as you, never.'

With that he started to close the door. But before the last click of the catch Sheikyn and Sal had started to walk away. Both walking slowly along the yard and under the walnut trees. And all the time the rain, the noise of it heavy on the full leaves. Pwll yard where in the old days the lawns had been green and the trees had given shade. Sheikyn and Sal half tempted to go into one of the barns and lie there in the dry straw.

But, as Sheikyn said, the old man is sure to be waiting. A man who sits all his days in a chair like that has little to do except watch, and wait.

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

RABELAIS. JOHN COWPER POWYS The Bodley Head. 15s. THE scope of Mr. Powys's book on Rabelais may be succinctly indicated by a transcription of his title-page. It embraces 'His Life, the Story he told, Selections therefrom newly translated, and an Interpretation of his Genius and his Religion'. Since the Selections are lavish, it is a big book, of four hundred and twenty pages, and much matter to the page. And it is a very good book too. Devoted, loving, and frequently exasperated admirer of Mr. Powys as I am, and the reader of a prodigious number of his writings, I incline to set it with his best. One does not lay one's hand on one's heart for such a declaration, one admits the immediacy of the latest read, and one is aware that this is a book with more than one author.

Mr. Powys is always disclaiming scholarship so humbly that he does himself harm with reviewers. He heaves up his hands in adulation of what he calls the 'Mandarins'—the recorders of new readings, the putters-in of commas, the masters of the textual crossword; he prostrates himself before palæographers. In the Preface to *Rabelais* he calls himself 'a simple bookworm'—this man who is steeped in six of the world's great literatures more than most of us in one, with his vast Orcus-chasm of a mind crammed full of mythologies, religions, philosophies, moralities, languages, fantasies, atomisms, antinomies of the profoundest and sometimes the most childlike kinds. He is not too well read in the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* and feels himself at a disadvantage: we, his readers, are of course soaked in the *Hyp*—the *Hypno*—the, um, what-you-call-it; Love-battles in a dream are our nightly sustenance; at a pinch we could recite old Polly Philly backwards. Such is the assumption. The truth is that Mr. Powys is a solvent of scholarship, and that the present work, despite certain innocencies, is both exposition and scholarship of a special and rewarding kind. It would be rash to say that no one else living could have written it. It is past argument that no one

else has. Most of the exposition comes from a mingling of minds, and it takes a big mind to mingle with that of Rabelais and not reveal the pitiful self-importance and dusty insignificance of a fly on a cart-wheel. Here are two giants, loquacious, atheistical—pagan—Christian, bookworms (not simple), humorous and tolerant, discoursing with intellectual zest, philological abundance, and a vast faith in human goodness, among the furious ideologies of their times; and both in agreement with Aristotle that it is laughter, humour if you will (not 'that pustule, that abscess, that gangrene upon its sweet and friendly flesh which is called Sature'), the essence of the herb Pantagruelion, alone of human qualities, which distinguishes us from other animals and balances our minds between the perilous fanaticisms of extremes. They are never more at one than when they rebut the assumptions of authority and taboo, or castigate the practice of authority and cruelty—unless it is when they praise the earthy excellence of homely men or honour the quixotries of wide-ranging travellers of the mind and the magnanimity of such philosophizing princes as Grandgousier, Gargantua, and Pantagruel. They are for the free spirit, and would open the gates of Thelème to all who reverence love, beauty, and humour. And what Mr. Powys has to say of the first half of the sixteenth century is as stimulating as Rabelais' observations are relevant to the first half of the twentieth.

Mr. Powys divided the art of translation, in its worthwhile manifestations, into the methods of 'literal' and 'by paraphrase'. The measure of success in the second method is to be determined by how far the translator, by an eloquent and inspiring paraphrase of his original, by a metempsychosis of its subject-matter, can produce a contribution to the literature of his own country; the success of the 'literal' translation is to satisfy the craving of the soul for a mental sensation that our own literature, just because it is our own, can never give. It will be entirely successful when by the exploration of alien particulars it touches the same universal humanity which thrills us in our own writers of genius. 'What we want therefore from a translation is not a display of a fellow-countryman's gifts for turning foreign classics into English classics, but

a real *initiation*, at any cost to our comfort in reading, into the actual psychic *smell*, if I may say so, and the intimate *physical taste*, of a new and foreign approach to the *universally human*. In this most unusual sense of the word Mr. Powys's translation may be 'literal'—not a verb-for-verb and noun-for-noun version, but a gallant sinking into the foreignness of his author. That most of it would read the same if the aim had been well-judging paraphrase, is probably a Gasterian fancy of the reviewer's. But a glance at Mr. Powys's 'literal' translation of a specimen passage on page 13 and his actual version of that same passage on page 231 suggests that sometimes at least when he is translating at the top of his powers he lets the theory go hang. The results are splendid. His Rabelais is a powerful and exciting author, copiously rendered into exciting, countryside-and-book-flavoured, and when the occasion demands, moving English. The excrescences of Urquhart (most of us mean Urquhart when we mention Rabelais) are cut away, and for many readers the Powys version will be a revelation of the controlled swiftness and thewed strength of the original. And what a wise author he was! An Atlas among men.

In the essays on Rabelais' genius and religion which follow the translation proper there is much wisdom and some repetition. It is wisdom of a genial and magnanimous kind desperately needed to-day, which may be an excuse for the repetition. Rabelais certainly knew the kind of heads into which he hoped to let a little light—the thick, hardly penetrable bone over a grey and squeechy infusion of prejudice, ill-judgment, prohibition, confusion—and was never afraid to teach a lesson three times. Is his twentieth-century audience any better? Mr. Powys has no hesitation in replying yes. Slowly and with dislocating setbacks for each generation, we progress. Because *Rabelais* is rich with such confidence in humanity, because of the immense appreciation of one great man for another to be found on all its pages, and because the translations are a literary event, this is a book to read and treasure.

GWYN JONES

ELIZABETHAN AND METAPHYSICAL IMAGERY.

ROSEMOND TUVE. University of Chicago Press; Cambridge University Press. 33s.

E. S. DALLAS complained in 1866 that imagery was being over-studied; but it is difficult to imagine a critic to-day making that complaint, despite the intensive working of the field during the last thirty years. The pioneers were Professors Wells and Spurgeon; the latest, most comprehensive and most illuminating work comes from Professor Tuve.

The full title of this book is important; *Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery; Renaissance Poetic and Twentieth-Century Critics*. Miss Tuve is the first critic to realize explicitly that images cannot be studied in isolation, and that semantic problems are involved, so that a study of imagery is never a proof, only an indication. These sensible but hitherto overlooked starting points enable her to avoid the inadequacies, inconsistencies, and tautologies of the Spurgeon or image-counting school. Furthermore, because she relates with weight and detail of learning the poetic practice of the Elizabethans and Jacobeans to the contemporary background of poetic theory (rhetoric), she is able to correct most of our modern misapprehensions of these poets. Critics, scholars, and common readers have assumed that, because we to-day find Metaphysical poets particularly to our taste, therefore the Metaphysical poets felt, thought, read, and wrote poetry in ways akin to our own, an unwarranted assumption. All our clichés about the modernity of these poets, about the Metaphysical shudder, the Metaphysical revolt, the pessimism and the psychological conflict of the seventeenth century are, in fact, suspect.

Seventeenth-century poetry, no less than Elizabethan, was written in accordance with Renaissance poetic theory, and that theory, in contrast to Romantic and Symbolist doctrines, was concerned with 'right artificiality' (Harvey's phrase) and was essentially didactic. Professor Tuve may make too much of Ramus, but she does not exaggerate the importance of the background of rhetoric possessed by every Jacobean poet or the didacticism to which their poetry conformed. Her book, and the importance of its carefully wrought lesson, are

summed up in these two sentences (p. 409): 'The didactic theory operates to lessen the emphasis upon the sensuous function of images and to subtilize and multiply the logical functions they are capable of performing. Both these habits of thinking run counter to what Romantic criticism and Symbolist doctrine have taught us to expect of poetic imagery.' So much for the value of this work—a study based on valid assumptions, correcting modern misapprehensions, and treating its subject, not in isolation, but as an integral part of the wider subject, poetry. But although this is the best, and perhaps the only important work on imagery we possess, it is not completely satisfactory.

The writer sets out with a thesis, to prove, with all the learning and sensibility at her command, that Metaphysical poetry as much as Elizabethan was written in accordance with Renaissance poetic theory and the rules of decorum. This is undoubted. But the unwary reader might feel on finishing this book that there is no difference between the imagery of Sidney and that of Donne, an illusion quickly dispelled by reading a poem by each author. Professor Tuve is right to question the validity of image studies based on content reference alone, but wrong to disallow the importance of image content altogether. When all allowances have been made for Donne's frequently satiric intent, for the fact that scientific images were not as dissonant in the seventeenth century as we usually imagine, but are to be found throughout *médiéval* and Renaissance poetry, the fact remains that Donne had a particular and remarkable interest in the 'newe philosophy' and that interest is reflected in his imagery. Like her predecessors, Professor Tuve also ignores the privately symbolical or ritualistic sense in which some poets use certain words. Two obvious examples from this period are Marvell's 'green' and Crashaw's 'nest' which is used time and again in a ritualistic manner divorced from sensuous impression and from theory of decorum. Finally, though concepts of the modernity of the Metaphysicals are suspect, the seventeenth century was a time of conflict and tension, and there is a strain in Metaphysical poetry, above all in that of Donne, absent from Elizabethan. Miss Tuve's theories

do not account for this baroque tension; in her concern with rhetoric and the actual poetry she ignores the other factors in the background which helped to make that poetry what it is.

The book which we still await on imagery will begin where Professor Tuve has begun, but it will extend her work to include the valuable indications given by content reference, unconscious association, private symbolism, the connection with sound and pattern, and the complex of background factors. Meanwhile we are grateful for this sensible and valuable study of imagery which is, as it should be, also a study of poetic and poetry.

T. H. JONES

THE CLASSICAL BACKGROUND OF ENGLISH LITERATURE. J. A. K. THOMSON. Allen and Unwin. 12s. 6d.

'THE GREEKS,' remarks Professor Thomson, 'thought of most things that are not just mechanical inventions and we neglect what they said at our own risk.' His warning is timely. The reaction against Dr. Arnold's school has induced a reaction against its curriculum. Hence, H. G. Wells censures 'the tyranny of the classics' and Professor C. E. M. Joad wonders whether his study of the Greek and Roman languages was not a waste of time. Moreover, students who would have studied the classics two generations ago now prefer the disciplines of English, French, or German literature. It is for these students with small Latin and no Greek that Professor Thomson has designed the volume under review by attempting to assess the character and, within strict limits, the extent of the influence exerted by the two ancient literatures upon our own.

Nearly half of Professor Thomson's book is no less than a considered effort to introduce his readers to the most important classical authors. Before conducting this tour of his literary pantheon, he judiciously summarizes what its hierarchies have in common. When a student, I for one would have been attracted by Professor Thomson's reasons for believing that classical literature is animated more than other literatures by a love for, and faith in, reason; that 'sophrosyne' implied a creative as well as a controlling power of using an economy of

means to obtain singleness of effect without loss of intensity; and that the period is the characteristic sentence of Greek and Latin prose. Correspondingly, I would have been sorry that there were no plates of the different styles of pottery whose development illustrates these arguments. As a teacher, I wish that Professor Thomson had illustrated in his subsequent chapters the fact that there is a distinctly romantic strain in several classical writers, and that it is possible for the terms 'classical' and 'romantic' to overlap, as an examination of the ambiguity of Euripides, the language of Æschylus, the temperament of Plato, the romances of Longus, and the criticism of Longinus will prove.

Professor Thomson's latter chapters amply testify to his dictum that 'every age looks for what it likes' in the classics. Stories attracted the Middle Ages most and that explains its disproportionate interest in Statius, Dares, and Dictys. Renaissance readers were more omnivorous; the pastoral romances and Pliny fed their appetite for the rich and strange, Plato and Plotinus their hunger for the ideal, and Seneca and Cicero their taste for literary form and ethical precepts. The eighteenth century was more temperate both in its reading and in its reactions; from the time of Bentley a distinction arises between the professional scholar and the professional author, who now tended to look to Latin for his models of correctness and good sense. 'To copy nature is to copy them,' said Pope, and Vergil, Horace, Ovid, and Claudian attracted the sincerest form of flattery. The Scholarship of Porson and his successors produced an enthusiasm for Greek literature in the nineteenth century, but the Romantics and Victorians were 'classically educated, but not classically minded', and discovered romantic charms in Homer, Sappho, and even in Vergil. This pervasive enthusiasm has waned. 'The trend of contemporary literature,' observes Professor Thomson, 'is not classical; it is perhaps anti-classical.' Besides the factors already mentioned, a cult of the French has displaced the cult of the Greek.

Limited space unfortunately cramps and confines Professor Thomson's illustrations of these phases of influence. Yet he makes deft use of Sir Philip Sidney to illustrate the complex

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response of the Renaissance to the classics and aptly summarizes Milton's debt to Vergil in matters of style. There are interesting comments, too, on the relationship of Tennyson's *Idylls* to Theocritus's *epyllia*; the limitations of Arnold's appreciation of the classical are justly defined; and the secret of Browning's interest in Euripides—'the first great voice of European Liberalism'—is laid open to us.

To say, however, that Shakespeare's conception of history was the same as Plutarch's (p. 108) is to ignore, on the one hand, the Tudor ideology which Shakespeare acquired from Hall and Holinshed, and, on the other, the impulse which made him transmute Plutarch's heroes into *tragic* heroes. I would question, too, whether Dryden went 'above all to Juvenal' as a model (p. 203). In his *Discourse concerning the Original and Progress of Satire*, Dryden avers, 'I have preferred the manner of Horace to that of Juvenal,' and the 'fine raillery' of his best satire is surely too Olympian to descend to 'saeva indignatio'.

Professor Thomson's style has at times a Maughamesque urbanity and edge, and his readers need not be exclusively academic. I think that their debt to him would be the greater if he added to future editions a short guide to translations and a selective bibliography of some of the admirable studies of classical life and literature which have appeared during the last twenty years—a list in which I would include Miss Naomi Mitchison's best novel, *The Corn King, and the Spring Queen*.

WILLIAM A. ARMSTRONG

THREE POETS FROM WALES

POEMS FROM OBSCURITY. MARGIAD EVANS. Dakers, 5s.

THE STONES OF THE FIELD. R. S. THOMAS. Druid Press. 6s.

THE BARREN TREE. WYN GRIFFITH. Penmark Press. 8s. 6d.

THE three books under review have only one thing in common; they are the products of Welsh writers. Yet, although they differ very considerably in style and content, each bears the



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stamp of its origin as unmistakably as do tone and accent of Welsh speech.

I place Margiad Evans first because there is hardly a verse of hers but cries 'I am from Wales, look you'.

So we look and—looking again—admire.

And it is necessary to look again, for her poems are tenuous and simple as rain-mist on the mountains; water-colours of a sensitive mind, so nearly in monochrome that we need the poet's eye to catch the life-colours underneath:—

'And sometimes in me sings
A bird with proven wings,
Who rides the air with spurs
To reach the supple stars'

Nowhere, not even in Blake, I fancy, does simplicity ride so dangerously; yet Margiad Evans avoids the pitfalls of banality and silliness and remains—even in her flattest lines and most obvious thought—a poet.

Sometimes she catches an idea, as in *Hawkweed*, for example, and almost—but never quite—destroys it with the pedestrian simplicity of the presentation:—

'When the bush of moon daisies flowered in the lane,
At twilight distance they looked as if they might have been a
milestone
To solitude—a mile perhaps at its far side,
Or fifty, or a hundred hours' journey.
I liked them for that and thought when I'd gone by them,
Nobody surely then would meet me or overtake me.

But now the hawkweed flower, bare and trembling, has come
To its date, and its yellow blows in the faded fields early
Where the stubble is forgetting slowly the wheat and the barley,
And the rooks make yawning noises waking mistily at morning,
And flap across the wind—but still no-one overtakes me.'

In her small poems about birds there are simple reflections a third-rate sensibility would have versified for some popular fifth-rate magazine, but which, with Margiad Evans, become like the transitory jewels of snowflakes.



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Consider for a moment, this:—

'RAIN

The poet felt the rain
Falling on his hair
Like a dreamer's light
Given everywhere;

Falling from the cloud,
Falling from the moon,
From the shells of spheres
Hidden in the noon.

Underneath a leaf
A silent bird, aloof,
Listened to the rain
On his trembling roof.'

What an excellent little poem it is. And yet, how easily, by over-stressing the rhythm, enlarging the sentiment, it could have sunk to the level of Joyce Kilmer's *Trees*. But:—

Thank God that I shall never hear
The *vox humana* ringing clear,
Or have the music of this poet's flower
Dust-trampled in *The Twilight Hour*.

A sensitive composer may make something of *Rain* in the future; it will not be for the *vox humana* on the Mighty Wurlitzer.

* * *

Mr. R. S. Thomas, too, can crystallize the small things into the poetic image. He has not the inner ecstasy of Margiad Evans, but his eye is as clear, and his imagination is constructive:—

CYCLAMEN

They are white moths
With wings
Lifted
Over a dark water
In act to fly,
Yet stayed
By their frail images
In its mahogany depths.



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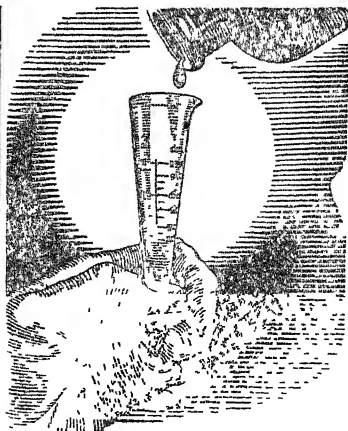
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He is not always so happy when faced with a grimmer subject, and *The Country Child*:—

‘Dropped without joy from the gaunt womb’
has ‘luckless eyes’ and:—

‘An ash tree wantons with sensuous body and smooth,
Provocative limbs to play the whore to his youth.’

But he weds in the end:—

‘A wife half wild, half shy of the ancestral bed.’

Good luck to him! But I seem to remember his like, and her like, and the like of the ash tree many times before—notably in those endless fictions of feuds, lusts, soils, and souls which for some reason or other (probably length) were foisted on us as works of Welsh genius in the nineteen thirties. I prefer *Cold Comfort Farm*, or the delicacy of Mr. Thomas’ own *Frost*:—

‘Thoughts in the mind’s bare boughs sit dumb,
Waiting for the spring to come:
The green lispings, the gold shower,
The white cataract of song,
Pent up behind the stony tongue
In stiff tribute to the frost’s power.’

But he is still young enough to perpetrate the cliché, and to imitate others (Yeats, Dylan Thomas, and, I think—Louis MacNeice) without adding much of his own. The endeavour is honest and the technique tidy, and I am a little reluctant to be too critical of a volume which gave me real pleasure.

In addition, I wish that the publishers had reproduced an excellent dust-jacket by M. E. Eldridge *inside* the book as a frontispiece. It has a grace all its own.

* * *

After Margiad Evans and R. S. Thomas, I must confess to finding Wyn Griffith’s *The Barren Tree* rather tiring. Margiad Evans said much in very few words and the images she evoked stay in my memory. Wyn Griffith is words. All the time I am reading I feel that he is telling me something, but always—by the end of the poem—I have forgotten what it is. In fairness to myself who can take the dullest Cowley or Wordsworth in my stride, I claim that it is not mere length which defeats;

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with the *Barren Tree* my mind wanders and Wyn Griffith has no startling image, no sudden felicity of phrasing to bring me back and willing. His worth is solid, care-woven, almost (in a non-derisive sense) bourgeois.

Here is a good example of his manner and much of his content:—

IF THERE BE TIME

If there be time enough before the slaughter
 let us consider our heritage
 of wisdom, remembering the coil of laughter
 girdled our youth, wine of bright vintage
 carrying short sorrows into oblivion;
 some talk of love in smooth meadows
 where dusk brings quiet and night a vision
 of daylight joys freed from their shadows.
 Above all, wisdom: for years are shrinking
 into a huddle of days and the world a parish
 where neighbours bolt their doors and lights are dimming.
 Soon there will be nothing left for us to cherish
 but the grave words of the last statesmen
 before the battle starts and the air is darkened:
 fast fall the night upon the frightened children
 and on the wombs where once they quickened.
 What towered land of man's endeavour
 will first be desert, with all our learning
 a burnt page trodden in the dust of error?
 Farewell to wisdom and to all remembering.

One applauds the sentiment and respects a warning which is even more portentous to-day than when it was written. And there are lines of great merit. For all that the poem seems to remain an exercise and does not come alive.

If it is unfair to praise the younger poets and be dubious of one who made a solid reputation years ago, I can only say that I live in *My Time*—and that to-day it is not sufficient to write well; to be angry; have pity; to have faith or to believe. The poet must create—build something out of the ruins of anger, pity, faith, and belief.

When it is done it will be very simple: Margiad Evans like a lark singing over the desolation of battle which Wyn Griffith experienced.

DENIS BOTTERILL